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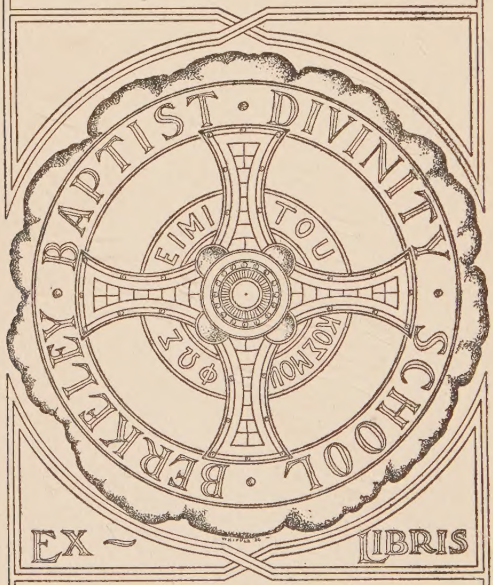

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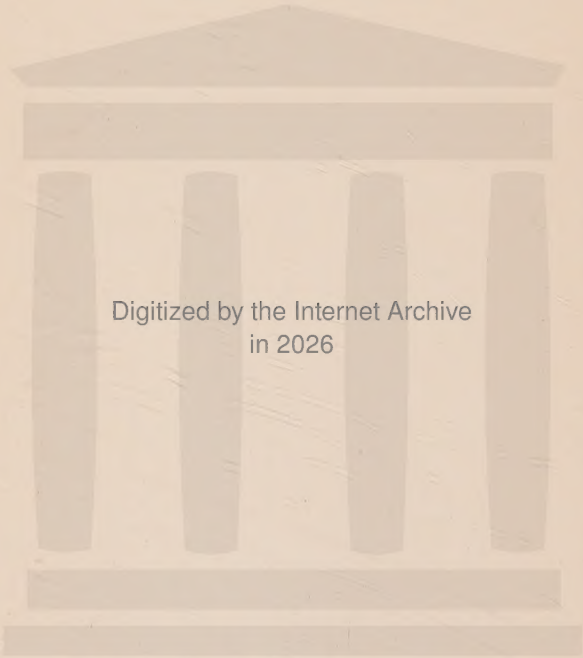

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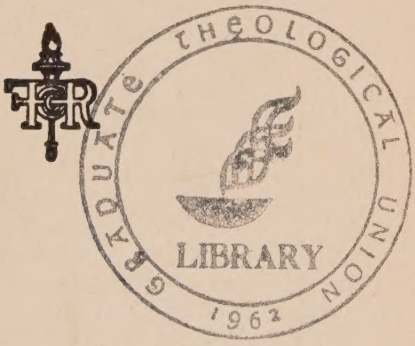
The Call and Challenge of the Unseen

By

F. B. MEYER, D.D.

Author of "Peter: Fisherman, Disciple, Apostle," "Old Testament Heroes," "The Shepherd Psalm," etc.



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PREFACE

IT is a sincere pleasure to learn that *The Call and Challenge of the Unseen* is being issued by an American publishing house—and especially by that of Mr. Fleming H. Revell, my friend of long ago.

Many, though not all, of these addresses were delivered in various parts of the United States, during my recent tour; and the welcome they received encourages the belief that they meet the need of the hour, and will help to promote that consecration to our Lord and that faith in the Divine Spirit, which are the salient demand of our time.

The Church of Christ needs, as Jonathan Edwards wrote in 1744, to seek for "a general Revival of Religion and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom on the earth"; and it is my fervent hope that these pages may help to quicken the hearts of God's children in that direction.

F. B. MEYER.

London, England.

1274

"There be days
When some are known to feel 'God is about';
As if that morn, more than another morn,
Virtue flowed forth from Him. The rolling world
Swam in a soothèd mode resonant
And vital . . . until she slept and had a dream,
That all the air shook with the might of Him;
And whispered how she was His favorite world
That day, and bade her drink His essence in!"

—JEAN INGELOW.

CONTENTS

I.	The Brooding Spirit	9
II.	The Victory of Calvary	18
III.	The Preparing of Peter for Pentecost	35
IV.	The Dynamic of Pentecost	41
V.	The Day of Pentecost	55
VI.	The Law of the Spirit	68
VII.	With Thee is the Fountain of Life	83
VIII.	Attuned to the Spirit of God	94
IX.	The Problem of Our Personal Sinnership	104
X.	The Fiery Ordeal of Temptation	116
XI.	Dislocated Limbs	127
XII.	Not Water Only	138
XIII.	The All-Sufficiency of Christ	148
XIV.	The Quiet Heart	161
XV.	The Day is at Hand	174

"If we say that religion is the absolute surrender of the soul to God, the surrender is not that of the mystic striving after self-annihilation, but 'the joy in God' of the spirit, which, in the inmost depths of its being, thrills with the consciousness of unimpeded union with the life of the Infinite."—JOHN CAIRD.

I

THE BROODING SPIRIT

"The spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters."—Gen. i. 1–5.

THE opening paragraph of Genesis is very old. It was old when Moses heard it first from the lips of his mother, in the slave huts by the Nile; old when Abraham received it as a tradition from before the Flood; old, perhaps, when Enoch walked with God. As the Bible ends in an Apocalypse, an unveiling of the future, so it begins with an Apocalypse, an unveiling of the past. The same angel of revelation may have operated in each case; and as in the one we have the seven seals, trumpets, and vials, so we are not surprised to find here the successive stages of creation, each of which covered a vast period of time, classified under the heading of seven days.

A timeless chasm evidently intervenes between the general statement of the first verse, and the focusing of our attention on the one planet, in which we are directly interested. It has been surmised that, in that gulf of time, occurred the fall of the angels who ruled here but who "kept not their first estate," and that this accounts for the title applied to Satan of *god,* or *prince,* of this world. It is possible that this also explains the allusion of the Apostle, when he says that the creation became subject to vanity "by reason of

him who subjected it." There is a freckle on the fairest flower, a touch of *accidie* in the happiest life, a miasma brooding over the loveliest scenes; it would be interesting if all this were due to some malign influence generated in distant ages, and marring the "very good" of the Creator.

But we have now to deal with an earth, which was without form and void. No mountains or valleys, no configuration of coastlands, nothing to break the blank monotony of the waste: no living thing existing in those sullen waters. The house of life was being built, but there was no occupant; not an amœba, not a zoophyte! Dense clouds, perhaps the result of a gradual cooling process, like a huge pall enclosed the entire globe, and excluded a single ray of light. During those ages the spaces of the universe were pervaded with a dim luminosity, which was afterwards to be focused in the sun. Beneath that dark canopy the wild waves seethed, sighed, loosed themselves into a rage of foam, and then sank down to a dull moaning of restless despair. Darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the reign of chaos seemed to defy control.

The only alleviating trait in the whole scene is cited in the extraordinary announcement, that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters!" Is not this an astounding announcement? Surely such a scene was the very last spot that the Spirit of God might have been expected to select. Heaven's holy peace, the blue spaces of the azure, the sea of glass outspread before the throne, would better befit His holy, gentle, and peace-loving nature. But God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways. And,

whatever we might have expected, here at least is the announcement that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

For *moved* the margin substitutes *brooded.* It is interesting to find that in the year A. D. 350 an old father of the Church, Basil by name, preached on this passage. He says, "These words may be the portico of a temple, or the forecourt of a sanctuary, but if they be, how dazzling bright must be the Holy of Holies, to which they form the entrance. In sublimity, purity, in strength of diction, they stand unrivalled. They form the portico of the Bible, the forecourt of the sanctuary, in the inner Holy of Holies of which Jesus Christ is to be found." He goes on to say that a Syrian, who knew little of the world, but much of God's truth, had told him that the word should be translated *broods.* How sublime are these old simple images! When God would utter His greatest thoughts, it is in the simplest imagery, and here it is the bird brooding over her nest, until her vitality is communicated to the eggs. It is an inspiring and suggestive thought that, over the darkness and chaos of those early stages, there was brooding the warm bosom of God's love, and that, moving stage by stage from that beginning, He was able finally to say, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and he shall have dominion."

The use made by Paul of this passage (2 Cor. iv. 6) suggests that he saw a parallel between these verses and their spiritual analogies. In later days Pastor Stockmayer, in his *Meditations in Genesis,* still further elaborated the analogy between the work of the Holy Spirit, in reconstructing a chaotic world, and His work

in the human heart. Concerning this preparatory work he says: "The Spirit of God prepares the way for the Word of God. Before God speaks the creative word (Gen. i. 3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26), the Spirit of God must make ready His way. He hovers, He moves, He broods over the heart as a hen over her young. Before the sinner awakes to grace out of the world of chaos in which he has been living, an uneasiness comes over him. It is the brooding of the Holy Spirit. While we are praying and giving forth the Word of God in public assemblies or in personal conversation, the Holy Spirit is at work to bring about the sense of need that develops into conviction."

After unknown æons of brooding, we read that God said, "Let there be light: and there was light." Some strong archangel, who had been waiting for the word of command, rolled back the curtain of cloud; a light broke in revealing the chaos and storm that had reigned so long. This gave hope! This division of the light from the darkness revealed a new principle. The light was good. It came from another sphere. It gave ground for hoping that there might be further gifts from that sphere. It was a revelation of possibilities. It was "good" in God's sight. It was akin to His own nature, for God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all. So when the angel's action permitted the flood of light to enter, the particles with which the interspace was filled, but hitherto hidden in the atmosphere of murk and chaos, suddenly discovered that they were predestined to be the organs and transmitters of light. When the light broke in, they all, as it may be said, suddenly awoke to their capabilities, their use, and the final ends of their creation. The

fulness of time had arrived, and they were needed to disseminate light.

Let us now pass to the creation of man, and notice the five facts narrated of God's conception of what he was meant to be. His nature was tripartite, consisting of spirit, soul, and body. He was to have dominion. He was to be zoned in a garment of light, as our Lord was on the Mount of Transfiguration. He was invited to intimate communion and converse, as Adam in Paradise, "in the cool of the day." He was God's fellow-worker in the garden that He had planted. The Fall consisted in the substitution of the reasonings of the soul for the intuitions of the spirit. The woman saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the senses and good for food, and to be desired to make wise, and she and Adam ate. But at that moment the Shechinah ceased to shine in the spirit, and God could no longer converse with man's spirit. Thus the holiest shrine of our nature fell into disuse; and in after-days it could be said that the merely natural or *soulish* man could not receive the things of the Divine *Spirit,* because they must be spiritually discerned.

Every one is endowed with a spiritual nature, which is the soul's outlook on and capacity for God, just as, on the other hand, the body is the soul's attachment to this material world. But for the most part this higher nature is submerged, lost sight of, like a disused muscle, or an unexplored chamber in the constitution of our nature. One main object of Christianity is to rediscover the spirit, to use it, to make it pregnant, to teach man that it should be in constant use. In too many of us its existence and use are involved in impenetrable darkness. But Jesus by the Holy Spirit

seeks to awaken our slumbering spiritual sense; He calls to our transcendental nature, as to Lazarus in his sepulchre, or the young man at Nain, or to the little girl of twelve summers who had faded too soon, like a rare and beautiful flower. He can utter the imperative command to the spirit to arise and come forth. How absurd it is to speak of the Bible as played-out, when its profound philosophy is so seldom explained and so largely misunderstood! The Saviour bids us to be in subjection to "the Father of Spirits" and live! But His appeal in its depths of significance is largely ignored. Why does modern scholarship set aside the clear witness and teaching of Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and of the beloved Apostle John? It is almost certain that the former was an alumnus of the University of Tarsus, one of the most famous in that age, and that it was dominated by the philosophy of Aristotle: whilst the latter wrote for a constituency, which was saturated with the teachings of Plato. In fact, the religious intelligence of that age was surely in advance of that which characterizes the majority of the church-goers of the present day, many of whom find their epistles almost unintelligible.

Let us, therefore, affirm our belief in the tripartite nature of man as taught by the Apostles Paul and John:

The body, which is the organ of the world of matter;
The soul, which is the organ of our personality;
The spirit, which is the organ of the divine and eternal.

The soul, in the earlier stages of experience, strongly contests with the spirit for supreme control. The "I" of the one is in antagonism with the "Not-I"

of the other. The conflict is often long and dire, but it determines destiny; and our object in the following pages is to show how the Spirit of God agonizes to so infill and strengthen the human spirit, that it may become sovereign, transmitting its impulses to the soul, and bringing all the powers of our physical nature into captivity to the will of God. This is our task; but this is not *all*.

The culmination of creation was the appearance of the first man in the image of God, and the culmination of all that can be said by any of us, who would lead inquiries forward, is that all philosophies and systems, arguments and distinctions, teachings and exhortations, will fail, unless at the close, when Moses and Elijah have gone, we are left face to face with "Jesus only"; for when He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness shines into our hearts, the light of the knowledge of God's glory will be found focused on the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus, and Jesus only, must fill the spirit's vision. Not rules nor conditions, but Jesus Himself.

Hudson Taylor had a memorable experience, which will help us here. He says, "The consciousness of sin oppressed me. I prayed, agonized, fasted, read the Word, all without effect. I tried in vain to attain holiness for its own sake. But I came to see that it was not by striving after faith, but by trusting the Faithful One, that I obtained peace. It doesn't matter what situation we are placed in, He is ever in us, and He is adequate." We shall never gain strength and peace by asking how to get sap out of the vine. They can only become ours when we remember that Jesus *is* the Vine; that we are in Him by the act of

divine grace; and that we have ever to count on Him at every turn and in each emergency.

"The Lord Jesus received is holiness begun;
"The Lord Jesus cherished is holiness advancing;
"The Lord Jesus counted on, as never absent, is holiness complete."

Thus, therefore, we understand that when we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit we are restored to the status from which Adam fell, and each of the five particulars already mentioned is restored to us, in union with our Saviour. The spirit is relighted by the Shechinah of His Spirit. We have spiritual power. We walk with God in purity. We commune with Him face to face, and coöperate in His work.

As each Christian enters into that consciousness, he realizes that it is superabundant, overflowing, and ever freshly springing up. This puts fresh impulse into whatever we may say or do. It flows out from us in a living stream of love, often unconsciously to ourselves, but always fruitfully. So we keep on imparting to others, spending for others, giving to others, blessing others in exact proportion as we open the doorway of the spirit to the Lord Jesus Himself, the great Fountain of all love and blessing.

"And the evening and the morning were the first day." Man works from morn to eve; God from eve to morn. The night settles down upon the works of our hands, but with God there is no night, for the hours climb ever to a zenith which knows no afternoon. With man the brightest beginning is often overcast; God works with patient persistence to the perfect forming of Christ in our heart, as the chick is formed in the shell. Let us follow on, then, to know

the Lord, for His coming forth is prepared as the morning; and we shall see His face, and His name will at last be written on our foreheads; and there shall be no more night, for the Lord shall be our everlasting Light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended.

"There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long."

II

THE VICTORY OF CALVARY

PAUL left Athens in a very chastened mood. His address on Mars Hill had failed to produce the effect for which he had hoped. Two converts alone rewarded his efforts, and no church was formed there. He had argued, on the general grounds of Divine Creatorship and Providence, of human accountability and resurrection, of man as the offspring of God, and the absurdity of idolatry: but so far as the record of his address goes, there was no mention of the Cross. Was that the cause of his failure? Was it on his solitary walk along the isthmus between Athens and Corinth that he made up his mind to know nothing at Corinth but Christ crucified, and the Cross as God's power-house for those that believe? The careful reading of the early chapters of his first letter to the Church at Corinth will go far to confirm this suggestion.

Let us come to that Cross once more, remembering that it is the reflection in the waters of time of the dateless resolve of eternity; for the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. Here is one of God's eternal facts translated into the language of to-day.

Let us imagine that we are strangers in Jerusalem, drawn from all parts of the Roman Empire to witness the rites of the Hebrew Passover, of which the fame has gone out into all the world. So crowded is the city

that no hostel or caravanserai can give us room. We are obliged, therefore, to spend the brief warm night on the Mount of Olives, hard by the little villages of Bethphage and Bethany. With the first glint of the dawn, we arise and prepare ourselves for a day which shall be as our natal day, a day of days! We descend the mountain, leaving Gethsemane on the right, and cross the valley while the sun is low and climbing slowly above the horizon. Thus we find ourselves standing at the great closed gates of the city, in company with a group of peasants, who have brought their oranges, their figs, bananas, and the produce of their gardens, for sale in the bazaars. Presently the massive doors swing back. We enter and make our way at once to the magnificent stairway that leads to the Court of the Gentiles, beyond which we may not go. We pass across the vast tesselated floor to the eastern colonnade, with its matchless view of the hills of Moab towering to the right above the sullen waters of the Dead Sea. Before us is the Jordan Valley and the pasture lands beyond, while turning northwards we catch a distant glimpse of the great mountain ranges, which helped to make an heroic race, as the wars for freedom proved.

Above us are the Temple buildings, but thither we may not go, for "the Beautiful Gate" at the head of the steps will admit none but Jews. We can, however, hear the exquisite music of the Hebrew choir, and one verse is translated for us which runs thus:

"God is the Lord, who has shown us light;
Bind the sacrifice with cords even to the horns of the altar."

On reaching the foot of the great staircase, as we return, we are caught in a vast crowd of people, flowing in a tumultuous torrent in one direction; and presently find ourselves on the edge of a multitude that fills a spacious square from side to side. They are swaying to and fro under the influence of intense excitement, as waves swept by wild winds. This is the more remarkable as the day is still young. On the farther side of this piazza, immediately fronting us, is a magnificent building, under the portico of which two prominent figures are standing. The splendid dress of the one clearly indicates his rank and authority, whilst the man beside him is as evidently one of the people. These are obviously the centres of attraction to this vast, excited crowd.

Turning to a bystander, we ask him if he can explain the meaning of the extraordinary scene.

"Ah," he replies, "clearly you are strangers in the city, or you would not need to put that question. Yonder is the palace of the Roman Governor, and he is standing there. Those two soldiers behind him, with sheathed axes, are the lictors carrying the insignia of his rank. Beside him is a man called Jesus of Nazareth, whose name for the last three years has been on every one's lips. He has confined Himself mostly to the northern parts of this country, where He has carried on a great ministry of healing and preaching. Tens of thousands have assembled to hear Him, and this has aroused the envy of our religious leaders, who are determined to make away with Him. That dark-faced man yonder is the High Priest, Caiaphas, and I promise you that he will have his way, as a wild beast pulls down its quarry."

"What charges are they bringing against Him?" we ask.

"There's the rub," replies our informant. "They have been trying to trump up a charge against Him for the last three hours. If bribes to false witnesses, and the ransacking of every deed and word capable of being twisted to serve an evil interpretation, could have done it, it would have been done. But neither money nor false swearing could make out a case that would hold water. In my opinion He is a white soul, and thousands more think the same. Only half an hour ago, on my way here, I was met by a man I used to know, and as he passed me he said in tones that chilled my heart, 'I've betrayed innocent blood,' and he ought to know, because he has been His intimate companion. They have eaten the same food, slept out under the same skies, and shared cloud and sunshine. If any one should know, he should. From the desperate look on his face, I expect that by this time he has committed suicide. But besides this, this Jesus has never been known to confess sin, though He is one of the humblest men that ever lived. With us Jews, the holiest of our race, men who claim to have seen the face of God, have been the first to confess that they were undone, the chief of sinners, and the least of saints. But though this Man has lived in God, none has ever heard Him sigh in penitence or utter a word of compunction. Besides this, He has been the means of lifting hundreds of debased men and women into pure and shining lives. Pure in heart Himself, He has made them pure! The publicans and sinners believe in Him, and they of all others can detect counterfeits."

Is that so? Then since God is the Lord and He

hath shown us light, bring *a white cord* and bind us to one of the horns of that altar of surrender and consecration. Here and now let us register ourselves among His followers. All the world beside is smitten with leprosy, but He can make us pure in heart and able to see God.

A bystander, who has overheard our conversation, says that he can add a further instance to prove that yonder prisoner is no ordinary man. He says: "I was returning home late last night, from a friend's house, when I was attracted by a patrol of armed men, who were evidently set on a night arrest. I followed behind them, until at the entrance of a garden, known as 'the Garden of the Winepress,' I found that they were about to arrest this Jesus. But to my surprise, when He came out to meet them, it seemed as though they received a shock of power from His person which flung them backwards on the ground. When they recovered themselves, one of His followers, who clearly knew little about sword-exercise, made a stroke at one of the leaders of the band, and nearly severed his ear; whereat yon Man, whose wrists were tightly bound, asked liberty for His right hand, and reaching it out, touched and healed the ear, and gave His hand back to be bound. Now I said to myself: 'If He can do that, He is able to free Himself from this troop.' Yet, to my surprise, He allowed Himself to be led as a sheep to the slaughter. I had become so interested that I followed the band back to the High Priest's palace, and managed to get in with the crowd. There I witnessed the most astounding scene of all. As my friend here has told you, they sought all night to establish a charge against Him. Finally, when he saw

the whole case breaking down, the High Priest arose and, amid the tense silence of the court, put their Prisoner on His oath, and asked if He were the Son of the ever-blessed God. His judges bent forward and hardly breathed as they awaited His reply. He had not spoken before, but being challenged thus, He stood erect, and with a light on His face that seemed the seal and endorsement of the Almighty, He said: 'I am, and one day you shall see Me seated at the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.' That sealed His fate. They unanimously agreed that He should die; but, if you had known His character, as the purest and humblest of men, and if you had seen that light, you could not have doubted His assertion that He is God manifest in the flesh."

Is that so? Is yonder Man really God in the likeness of human nature? Is He the mystic ladder that links God and man, the Mediator, the Daysman who can lay His hands upon us both? Then fetch *a golden cord* and bind us to the altar of fellowship and union with Him, that we may realize what all the rites and philosophies of pagan temples have failed to afford. God is the Lord and He has this day shown us light!

Here a woman, who has been attentively listening, breaks in. "May I speak?" Certainly! "Ah!" she says, "you men may talk about His goodness and deity, but there is more than that which accounts for the love which has poured out to welcome Him from every town and nearly every home in Galilee. He is full of selfless love. I remember that once I was staying at a mountain village, where the only son of his widowed mother had died and was being borne to his burial. At that moment *He* happened to come up,

took in the situation at a glance, stopped the procession, made the bearers lower the bier, removed the cerecloth, took the hand of the young man, though it involved His ceremonial pollution, told him to arise as though He were awakening him from sleep, gave him back to his mother, and passed on without waiting for a word of thanks. He was always doing things like that; and didn't the people love Him! When He visited a town or village the children trooped around, sure of a smile. He never sent them away. I have seen a little boy nestling next His heart, as He spoke to the people. Aye, He is one of the purest, gentlest, most loving of men, and always had a word for those who were weary and heavy laden."

Again we are arrested. Is not this what the world and we are waiting for? We seem to have been living in the Arctic Zone. Lover and friend can only wade a little distance with us into our "river of sorrow." The big selfish world rolls past us in its chariot, indifferent to our appeals for help. But is there love in the heart of that lone Man, which can change winter to summer, tears to smiles, and loneliness to fellowship? If so, thank God for showing us light and love on the face of the Son of Man. Fetch *a blue cord,* for blue is the color of depth, of the azure sky, of the deep ocean, of the crevasse and the gentian, and bind us to the third horn of that altar of consecration.

But, finally, there is one other, who is eager to add his testimony. He says: "I am a native of the lands on the farther side of the Jordan. It is a much wilder country than this; as you see, I have no pretence to education or the polite manners of the city. I learned

all I know from a marvellous man, who was the son of our wilder life. They called him the Forerunner; his name was John the Baptist. He was too straight for most of them, and they foully murdered him in his prison cell to please a wanton girl. I was standing with him, some three years ago, when yonder Man passed before us, and my master said, 'There goes the Lamb of God, who will bear away the sin of the world.' I asked him what he meant. He answered that he was not quite sure, but that he had an impression that He would do effectively what the sacrifices of our Temple did only in type. I know nothing more, but when I came by just now I saw the soldiers standing by three crosses, and I heard one of the High Priest's household say to another, 'If our master gets his way, he will have Jesus of Nazareth on one of these crosses before many hours have passed.' For my part, I believe that that man spoke the literal truth, and if it turns out to be so, you may be sure that He will bear away the sin and punishment, which no animal sacrifice could atone for."

This is indeed new light on the approaching tragedy, which is infinitely more than a tragedy. We are witnessing a sacrifice, but clearly it is absolutely voluntary. All the people around us give the assurance that He could easily have left the country and hidden Himself. But apparently He deliberately put Himself within the reach of His implacable foes. One of His sayings is recorded to the effect that He came, not to be ministered to but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. Is that so? Is He bearing away my sin? By His stripes can I be healed? Is God in this wonderful Man reconciling the world to Himself, by a

voluntary sacrifice? Then fetch *a crimson cord,* the emblem of blood, and bind us to that fourth remaining altar-horn. We need to be forgiven and to be forgiven righteously. If our Creator suffers for us, our redemption is certain. God is the Lord, and He has shown us light on the forgiveness of sin; and that crimson hue shall remind us of its cost.

While we have been talking thus, a murmur has been rising around us and spreading through the crowd. "Not this man, but Barabbas!" We learn that the latter had raised an insurrection against the Roman Government, in which murder has played a part, and he was to be crucified with two confederates this very afternoon. Clearly the prediction of our last informant is likely to be realized, and presently Pilate gives sentence as is desired, releasing Barabbas and, after scourging Jesus, delivers Him to be crucified.

How he must have cringed as through the window Barabbas heard his name shouted by ten thousand throats. His immediate conclusion was that he was going to be lynched, as soon as he emerged from the condemned cell. When the jailer came down the corridor to lead him out, may he not have said: "I suppose they are going to tear me limb from limb, before I reach the cross." "No, indeed," would be the reply; "lucky for you, your cross is wanted for another, and you are a free man." "A free man! What do you mean? Who is going to take my place?" "Ah, there's the mystery of it! Jesus of Nazareth is to have your cross!" "Jesus of Nazareth! It is impossible! He is the one white soul in the country. I am bad enough, Heaven knows, but

we bad men know when a man is good through and through. Often my men and I have stood in the crowd while He was speaking, and have been almost persuaded to turn over a new leaf! And *He* is going to die instead of *me!*" By this time Barabbas has reached the prison entrance. He is saluted by a mass of welcome, and perhaps carried shoulder high, the idol of the mob. But when they let him go, would he not hasten to the city, replace his prison garb by civilian clothes, remove from his person the traces of the prison, and then make for the scene of crucifixion, so altered as to be hardly recognizable? We see him standing before that central cross, after exchanging glances and words with the two other sufferers. He says to himself: "That's where I ought to have been, and I deserved it; but I am free, and He is suffering in my stead my sentence and my pain." I have often thought that that sight led him to a new life, that he was converted on the Day of Pentecost, and that he will be conspicuous amid those in heaven who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

The Cross Stands for Substitution

Christ died for the race. He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He was made sin for us that we might be made God's righteousness in Him. He, the Sinless One, who lived in the sphere of life, holiness, peace, and love, voluntarily stepped down into connection with our fallen race, and undertook by His identification with it to bear our just penalty, and stroke, and doom. He was numbered with the transgressors and bare the sin of the many, and made in-

tercession for the transgressors. "The sinless last Adam gathered the entire sinful race of the first Adam in His arms, and took them to Calvary." The stroke fell on Him and all whom He embraced, and His work is complete for all mankind. Because He possessed uncreated life, He could go down into the sphere of death and rise above it, taking with Him all those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and incorruption. Even people who have never heard of that wonderful redemption may hereafter participate in it (Rom. ii. 12–16). But for us all there is the danger of contracting out, as the servant contracted out of his Lord's forgiveness (Matt. xviii. 28–34). But if you do contract out, you should at least say "I thank Thee" to Christ before turning your back on His effort to save you and plunging into eternity "on your own"!

Before going another step, will you stand before the Cross and say these three sentences, thoughtfully and thankfully:

"He bare *my* sins in His own body on the tree."

"He loved *me;* He gave Himself for *me.*"

"He was wounded for *my* transgressions, bruised for *my* iniquities, the chastisement of *my* peace was upon Him, and with His stripes *I* am healed."

Sin has built up a wall between our hearts and God; but in Jesus Christ that wall has been thrown down once for all, and now there is nothing to keep us apart except our own blindness and pride. If only we will turn round and open our hearts to Him; if only we will accept the position He offers us, and which is already ours in Christ, there will be nothing to prevent our lives experiencing everything that the father

in the parable was prepared to do for his son. All this is implied in the cords that bind us to the altar!

But the Cross Stands Also for Separation

It is not enough to reach out our hands to receive the forgiveness of our sins, and then to live as we like. To obviate such an inference the apostles are always insisting on our identification with Christ. Everything that is predicated of Christ is true of us, who, by faith, have become identified with Him. In the thought of eternity we were in Him when He died. In Him we arose, alive unto God; in Him we were raised, as He ascended above all the powers of hell; in Him we are accepted and beloved. The whole New Testament assumes this. "As you died with Christ to the elemental spirit of the world, why live as if you still belong to the world? . . . since, then, you have been raised with Christ, aim at what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. You died and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Moffatt: Col. ii. 20, iii. 1, 3). "Surrender your very selves to God as living men, who have risen from the dead, and surrender your several faculties to God, to be used as weapons to maintain the right!" (Rom. vi. 13). "We become one with Him by sharing His Death; we shall also be one with Him by sharing His Resurrection," not in the hereafter, but now in our present life (Weymouth: Rom. vi. 5).

There can be no doubt that, in the view of the great teachers of the Church, she is regarded as separated from the world, which cast out the Son of God, and as living on the Pentecostal side of the Cross. This will greatly help us in deciding doubtful

matters. Of course we have, like our Lord during His earthly life, to mix with men, to conduct our businesses, to play our part in grave crises; but our behavior is guided by a spirit and by principles which emanate from our union with the risen and ascended Saviour. Then we understand that the principles laid down in the Sermon on the Mount are those which He uttered as "the Word of God," and are of eternal importance. Probably, also, they can only become the working principles of daily behavior when we are living in the enjoyment of those heavenly influences which belong to the Pentecostal age and in the energy of the Holy Spirit.

This thought will help to the solution of many difficult problems. A young girl who had become a true disciple of Christ, had partaken of the Communion, and was teaching in our Sunday School, brought me an invitation which she had received for an evening of fashionable and frivolous amusement. Now, I heartily believe in all rational recreation and amusement, and in our own church we have fostered whatever would make a healthy mind in a healthy body. Bright happy faces, high spirits, dexterity in games and sport—all these are consistent, as I believe, with true Christianity. The only caution to be added is that they are means to an end, and not the end. In the present case, however, I had to introduce another fact to my young friend, on which it was necessary that she, not I, should decide her action; for is not the Divine Spirit constantly presenting these problems in order to exercise our judgment, and lead us, on our dead selves, to step up to higher things? I, therefore, drew on paper the Cross. On the left

hand I wrote the words "The World and the Flesh"; on the right the words "Ascension and Pentecost." At the foot of the Cross I drew an oblong representing the Grave. Then I said, "Under which of these shall I put this invitation?" In order to test her I wrote it on the right hand, along with the Ascension. "No," she said, "it will not do there." I tried to put it next the crown of thorns, which hung upon the Cross; then next the Grave; but in each case she saw the incongruity, and finally, at her own request, I wrote the word on the left hand under "The World and the Flesh." She now saw that, if she accepted, she would have to pass from resurrection ground backwards through the grave for a stolen excursion to the world's side of the cross from which she had been redeemed.

But, for the most part, the redeemed lose their taste for the things that once charmed them. The old Greek myth tells of the siren sisters, who by their songs allured sailors from their course to their doom. Ulysses saved his crew by tying his sailors to their seats, while he with stopped ears steered the boat. But Orpheus did better. He sang so sweetly as to overpower and drown the siren-songs. The latter is the way of Christ. Those who follow Him do not walk in darkness, but have the Light of life; and with that light they become oblivious to the lights of the cruel wreckers along the beach. A young working-girl, speaking of a certain form of amusement, said: "I went every evening as soon as I had had my tea; I thought I couldn't live without it; but when I found Jesus, and He found me, I lost all my taste for it. I went the other night to see what it was that had held me, but I came out in ten minutes, and shall never go

again." Surely the Scripture says truly: "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." To this, also, our cords bind us, but it is to secure our perfect freedom.

The Cross Also Stands as the Gate of Fuller Life

It was so with Christ Himself: "Having been made perfect through death, he became the Author of eternal salvation to them who obey him." It was so with Paul: "To us who are being saved the word of the Cross is the power of God" (Rom. i. 16).

The grave difficulty with us all is the *Ego* which has its seat in the soul-life. The apostle calls it *the Flesh.* He says: "In me, that is, in my flesh" (Rom. vii. 18). Clearly, then, in his nomenclature the flesh is *me!* Spell flesh backwards, dropping the *h—s-e-l-f.* We are now dealing not with *selfishness* but with *self-ness.* We realize that there is the constant obtrusion of self in our most hallowed exercises. Even when we are singing God's praises, we are inclined to think how well we can do it, and in our most earnest appeals to men to come to Christ we are tempted to admire our earnestness, or to look back with self-satisfaction on the number of conversions. Sometimes we are tempted to be proud of our humility, and to congratulate ourselves on our knowledge of divine things. The disguises and chameleon-colors of the self-life deceive even the elect.

Dr. Tauler, Luther's predecessor, was a very learned and eloquent man. All Strasburg hung on his words, and he was somewhat startled, and perhaps rather annoyed, when Nicolas of Basle crossed the mountains

to say "Dr. Tauler, you must die." But his resentment became repentance, as his faithful monitor showed him, as in a glass, his real self, proud of his learning, popularity, and insight into the truth. Finally he left his pulpit, retired for meditation and heart-searching, and learned the secret of humility and selflessness at the Cross. When he returned and resumed his ministry, though he offended the high and learned, he preached sermons that live to-day in their English translation as high models of a devout and helpful ministry.

In the person of our Lord the likeness of our sinful flesh was nailed to the Cross. God sent His own Son in a body like that of sinful human nature, and by dying He pronounced sentence upon it. (See Dr. Weymouth's translation of Rom. viii. 3.) God therefore has condemned the I-life, has counted it a felon, has condemned it to eternal condemnation and crucifixion. Whenever, therefore, the "I" intrudes, we must at once consign it to its proper place. We must treat it as a criminal. Many voices will cry, "Come down from the Cross"; but we must not heed. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts."

But, you say, it is impossible to live like this. You fear that it may induce a harmful introspection and a morbid sensitiveness. But there is no fear of either, if you only remember that you have to hand over all that to the Holy Spirit. Whilst you are occupied with Christ, His voice, His personality, His love and grace, the Holy Spirit who reveals Him will see to the other side of this great process. It was by the Eternal Spirit that Christ offered Himself without spot to

God, and it is by the Eternal Spirit that the flesh, or the self-life, is going to be kept to the Cross.

"If ye *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh." Keep in touch with the Holy Spirit, occupy yourself with Christ, and the Blessed Paraclete will do the rest. This attitude also will be effected by our fourfold cords!

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The Cross, it standeth fast, Hallelujah!
Defying every blast, Hallelujah!
The winds of hell have blown,
The world its hate has shown,
Yet it is not overthrown:
Hallelujah, for the Cross!"

III

THE PREPARING OF PETER FOR PENTECOST

AFTER His visit to Jerusalem, our Lord seems to have itinerated, unaccompanied, in Galilee, but had now returned to the shores of the lake which was so dear to Him. In His boyhood days He must often have come from Nazareth on the hills above to visit in the home of His mother's sister; and through His cousins, James and John, He must have known Peter, who was probably older than any of them. As the years passed, the future leader of the Church married, and his wife's mother shared their home. Judging from the fact that oaths and curses came so readily to his lips when, in the high priest's palace, he was accosted as the companion of Jesus, we should judge that he was living on the level of the fishermen on the lake-side, who were not specially religious or careful in their talk.

On that memorable morning, when the day was still young, after a fruitless night, he and his men were washing their nets, preparatory to going to their homes for rest and food, when he saw Jesus approaching him, surrounded by a crowd of people, who were pressing Him on all sides. On reaching him, the Master probably pointed to a little rocky promontory that jutted out into the lake, and asked if Peter's fishing-boat could be moored to it, so that He might sit there

and address the crowd gathered on the water's edge. His request was immediately and gladly complied with, and we can imagine how he and his crew would sit on the boat, glad to be identified with the great Teacher, and eager to hear His words.

We can imagine the scene on that memorable morning. The sun slowly climbing to its throne and shedding its beams on lake, mountains, the shore, and the faces of the gathered crowd! We have no record of the Master's words, but we can imagine that He would draw His parables and illustrations from the mountains terraced with vines, or their upper slopes devoted to agriculture and the flocks of sheep!

When the sermon was over, and the people were dispersing to their homes, He turned to Peter and asked that the nets might be let down for a haul of fish. His probable motive in this request was that the sale of the fish would compensate Peter for the fruitless toil of the night, and pay for His immediate hire of the boat. Our Lord is very thoughtful about such things for those who are willingly serving His purposes.

Peter didn't realize how much, in all the future, hinged on his reply to that request. He at once demurred. From his youth he had been familiar with the habits of fish; and he knew that in the glare of the scorching day they would not only detect the meshes of the nets, but would seek the lower depths with their comparative coolness and shade. When, therefore, he heard the Lord's request, his fisherman's experience and the feeling that the Lord's request was made in ignorance of the facts—so obvious to himself and his men—he hesitated. "Master," said he, "we

have toiled *all the night* and have taken nothing." He knew that all his mates, who were probably watching the Saviour's movements, would laugh at him for starting on a fishing expedition at such a time. Besides, they were all tired out with the fruitless efforts of the night. Jesus might understand the methods of a carpenter's shop, but surely was in absolute ignorance of the elementary conditions of a fisherman's craft.

That was the crisis of his life, though he had no idea of its momentous character. Such moments come to us all, directly we become identified with Christ. He asks us to do things from which we would shrink if our companions or friends were to request them. To act almost against reason; to launch out into the deep under His captaincy! But happy are they who obey! He never fails them! All things become possible to those who believe! Christ assumes the responsibility when He gives the command, and never yet has He failed! Let us dare to obey Him, when we have quietly waited in the silence of His immediate Presence! More things are wrought by faith and prayer than this world wots of. Say with Peter, "Lord, at Thy command I will let down the net; I will act on Thy summons, though flesh and blood rebel."

So the boat sailed! Probably they passed one fishing-ground after another, till they reached a very unlikely spot; and then Jesus bade Peter let down the net. No sooner had he done so than it was filled by a great multitude of fish. So heavy was its weight that, as Peter held it, his forehead became bathed in sweat and the muscles of his arms were strained like whipcord. He told Andrew to summon the help of

their partners, James and John, who had been led by Peter's strange behavior to expect that some uncommon incident was imminent. Whilst they were coming, Peter was lost in thought. He said to himself: "What a wonderful being this Jesus is! He must be more than human! I always thought Him wonderful, but He is more than ever I dreamed! If He only knew what manner of man I am, He would not care to sit in my boat." Ah, how little he realized that Jesus knew all, and loved him better than he knew!

When the shoal was landed in the wells of the boats, Peter, with naked feet, stepped over the slippery pile and made for the stern, where Jesus was sitting. He knelt at His side, saying in effect: "O wonderful Man! Thou art too good for the like of me! I will run the boat to shore, and put Thee down, and Thou shalt go Thy way and I mine! I am a sinful man!" But Jesus said: "Nay, you must come with *Me,* and what you have seen to-day is the beginning of a new life for you. From henceforth thou shalt fish for human souls and fill thy nets with them."

Peter probably went to the other end of the boat, and sat gazing towards the nearest shore, as they sped before the breeze, pondering much on that future from which Jesus had withdrawn the curtain. When they reached the shore, he probably leaped out first, and then lifted Jesus to the beach that He might not wet His feet. He then turned to give directions to his crew.

May we not suppose that his wife had been informed by some friend on the shore that her husband's boat was returning? so leaving her mother to prepare the evening meal (for her husband had not been home for

breakfast) she went down to meet him. I imagine that he went up to her and said, "Wife, can you spare me for a little? Can you and your mother look after the boats and the men, and sell the fish?" "Why?" she asked. "Because," Peter replied, "that wonderful man, Jesus, has asked me to go along with Him for a bit, and He says He can make use of me! Now, can you spare me?" "Indeed, yes," she replied; "we'll carry on till you come back. I like you to be with Him. Only this morning, mother and I were saying that you had been a different man since you knew Him."

So Peter left all and followed Christ! He made many blunders, and had one terrible fall; but through the Master's watchful, loving care he became fit to be the Spokesman of Pentecost and the chief leader of the Church! On that day, when three thousand souls were gathered in the Gospel-net, did not he and Christ exchange happy glances, as they remembered their first fishing partnership!

Give yourself over to Christ to-day! He wants your help. He will use you beyond your furthest expectations. Dare to step out at His bidding! You also shall have the happiness to fill your net with living souls!

Even if you have been slipping away from your former close walk with God, do not shrink from stepping back to it, in the grace and power of our Lord. Remember how He sent a special message to Peter on the Resurrection morning: "Go, tell my disciples *and Peter* that I am risen"; and John still further encouraged him by giving him the result of his quick-sighted vision of the Lord. He might have plunged

into the water *himself*, but he knew that it would mean more to his fellow-apostle. Thus you also will be welcomed, however far you have wandered, not only by the Saviour, but by those who love Him and are loved by Him.

IV.

THE DYNAMIC OF PENTECOST

"Ye shall receive power."—Acts i. 8.

AMONG many happy experiences of a mission held under the Southern Cross was a motor ride from Launceston to Hobart. It will always stand out clear-cut in my memory. As I write, I see again that majestic range of mountains on my left, streaked here and there with snow, their aspect ever changing under the alternations of sun and cloud.

They told me that on their summit there was a lake of fifty miles in circumference, which supplied a waterfall a thousand feet in height. As with Niagara, so with this, the vast volume of power generated by the fall has been converted into an electric current, which now supplies the entire island with power. This has already tempted manufacturers to establish themselves in the neighborhood of Hobart, and is likely to attract others. There will be large demands for labor, and the prosperity of Tasmania will be greatly enhanced. Afterwards, when sitting at the hospitable table of my host, I discovered that the same current which was driving the factories was at work on the table, making delicious toast.

The suggestion of spiritual analogy was irresistible. For me, at least, that mountain lake, hidden from sight, carried my thought to the mystery of the Eternal God. The fall of descending water was a

symbol of the incarnation; whilst the diffusion of power to the factory and the home suggested the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is ready to minister a world-wide revival, or to solace one lowly believer. This is the power with which our Lord was anointed at His baptism. This is the power which on His ascension He communicated to His Church. This is the power of which we must avail ourselves, if we are to count in Christian service and warfare.

Would it not be the height of folly if Tasmania were to resolve to cut off the supply of power from that mountain lake and to substitute hand-power? Would not the factories soon close down, and the incipient harvest of prosperity suddenly wither? Yet it often seems as though the modern Church were in danger of making a similar mistake. In scores of cases she is disconnecting herself from the dynamic of Pentecost, and is endeavoring to find compensation for her loss of spiritual power in brilliance of intellect in the pulpit, in highly organized and expensive machinery, and by calling to her aid adventitious accessories, which are borrowed from the world; and which, even where they may be comparatively innocent, are totally unfit to secure the great ends for which she was called into being, according to the purpose and plan of her great Architect.

Far otherwise was the purpose of our Lord, when He led the little group of chosen friends to some familiar spot on the Mount of Olives, that He might give them His parting instructions and brace them for the stupendous task which He was about to commit to their care. Satan had offered to give Him all the kingdoms of the world for one act of homage. This

offer He had refused; but He was inaugurating a campaign which would win those same kingdoms, not by sword or scimitar, nor by pandering to human passion, but by blood and suffering, by the proclamation of the living voice, and notably by the coöperation of the Holy Spirit.

The Imperative Need of Power

The task that awaited that little group was one of unparalleled difficulty. They were charged with the obligation, not only of publishing the Evangel, but of inaugurating a revolution. They were to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. They were to disciple all nations, speaking different languages, scattered over the vast Roman Empire, which extended from the Atlantic to the Far East. They were to initiate a mission of regeneration and renewal, comparable to a new creation. They were to substitute Christianity for paganism, as the foundation of a new type of civilization. Upon the reception or rejection of their message eternal issues hung. In fact, humanly speaking and without exaggeration, it depended on that tiny group of unknown and ordinary men and women, whether the incarnation and death, the resurrection and ascension of the Son of God would obtain the audience and acceptance of mankind.

The task was stupendous, and the obstacles to success immeasurable. There were the philosophies and priesthoods of the ancient religions, jealous of the least invasion of their vested interests. There were the shameless licence and immorality of the Roman Empire, which have left their trail on the epistles of

the New Testament, as well as in the locked chambers of Pompeii. There was also the pride of the Cæsars, who would not brook the rivalry of another King, "one Jesus, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." In addition, let it be remembered that they had to conquer through the Cross. The Cross! It was the symbol of unutterable shame. The Cross! By common consent it was never mentioned in polite society. The Cross! Only the lowest criminals were condemned to suffer its terrible and shameful torture. To the Jews it was a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But this was to be the royal standard under which our Lord marshalled His troops to overcome the world!

We cannot consider these circumstances, which arose like a chain of Alps from the plains of human indifference and opposition, without realizing the enormous task which awaited the little company that clustered around the Saviour to receive from His lips their world-wide commission. But He knew all; and He would never have sent them forth unless He had known that the power which He promised to supply was amply adequate for their need.

But is not the Church to-day in danger of prosecuting her vast mission, without availing herself to the full of that divine power? Her ministers and missionaries are educated to a high level of intellectual efficiency, and many, very many of them, are earnest and devoted. Her finances are munificent. Her machinery complex and efficient. But she must always remember that she will fail of the results that alone can satisfy the travail of her Lord, unless her main reliance be upon the energy of that power to which He

referred when He breathed on the Apostles and said: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: as the Father sent me, even so send I you."

The power, which our Lord promised, was spiritual, i. e. *it was an appeal of the Divine Spirit to the human.*

"God is Spirit," said our Lord at Jacob's well. It seemed as though He were inaugurating a new era. The well of patriarchal piety might be deserted; the arguments as to where men ought to worship might be left unsolved; the expectation of a conquering Messiah might be unrealized; but the one outstanding feature of the new era was that the Father was seeking worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth. This is the highest level of human experience.

Our human nature can operate on three levels of experience. On the level of the material world by the senses of our body; on the level of the world of mind and morals by the perceptions of our souls; on the level of the eternal and spiritual world by our spirit.

For accurate and clear thinking we may regard the soul as the seat of our personality. It is you, or I, or any other. The reason, affections, emotions, judgment, and moral consciousness have their home there. But the soul looks out on two worlds. To the material world below it, it is related by the organs of touch, sight, smell, taste, and hearing. To the eternal world above it, it is related by the spirit, which seems to be endowed with similar organs of perception, extending even to the being "quick of scent in fear of the Lord." We have the option of descending by the spiral staircase downward to materialism, or of ascending by the spiral staircase upward to fellowship with the Eternal

and Divine. On the one hand, the lure of the savory pottage; on the other, the ladder which reaches to heaven and on which angels go and come.

There are multitudes, according to the teaching of the apostle (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15), who never rise above the natural or soulish level. They, like the first Adam, are living souls, but they know nothing of the last Adam who is a life-giving Spirit. They bear the image of the earthly; and die without having been lifted, through obedience and faith, into union with the heavenly Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are unlit candles! The inner chamber of their threefold nature has never been illumined by the Shechinah. The throne-room has never been occupied by the King. The windows that look out on the Delectable Mountains and the City of God have never been unshuttered.

But all this is altered when the soul turns towards God in faith and obedience. Then we are born into a new world; then we become aware of the unseen and eternal, as we used to be of the passing shadows of time and sense; then the spiritual senses are as quick to discern good and evil as our physical senses to distinguish light from dark and sweet from bitter. The Shechinah shines in the most Holy Place! The King ascends to His throne; and through the upper windows we look out on the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. Can we wonder that Jesus insisted on the necessity of being born from above; or that He said, with a touch of sadness, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"? Ah! happy day, when the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that

we are children of God, and as children become heirs to the priceless boons which the Spirit hastens to unfold.

The spirit is our capacity for God. When it is vitalized by the incorruptible seed, it enters into direct union with the divine nature. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." We move on new levels of experience; we touch reality; we climb the mountain ranges, which are reflected in the changeful waters of the time-sphere. We understand, not by reasoning, but by intuition—which reason afterwards verifies. And more particularly for our present purpose, we become receptive of that mighty power of which our Lord spoke in His farewell discourses, and which, in that last interview on the Mount of Olives, He pledged Himself to give.

It was to this organ of our nature that the Lord promised the Pentecostal gift, knowing well that, if only a channel could be formed between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, there would be a constant communication of grace and power, which would find its way into every avenue of the soul, enlightening the mind, enriching the speech, invigorating courage, sweetening the affections, and imparting a divine enthusiasm. He knew that even the body would become a temple of the Lord. The water of life that proceeds from the throne of God would flow through all the channels of our being, refreshing, cleansing, satisfying, and renewing; and then flowing forth, as the Scripture has said, to heal the marshes, create universal verdure, and ultimately make the waters of the Dead Sea sweet. Before we leave this insistence on the spirit-aspect of our life, as necessary to its harmony

with the Highest, let us record, and bear in mind, three outstanding facts:

1. This is the life which flows through the mystic Vine, in which all who believe are branches. As we abide in constant fellowship with the Saviour, we feel the pulse of the Spirit of life permeating our spirits as the sap permeates the branches.

2. This life is eminently practical. It pours into the soul, and dominates the body. When the lamp of the spirit is lit, the whole body is also full of light. There is no part dark, but everything is as when a lamp with its bright shining gives light to all that enter the house.

3. One of the best methods of quickening the life of the spirit is worship. The repetition of Isaiah's Thrice-Holy, or of the Gloria in Excelsis, or of any of the outbursts of adoration recorded in the book of Revelation, will at once bring us into contact with the world of reality.

Will not some, who have read thus far, ask themselves whether their spirit may not resemble a disused muscle, present but atrophied? Do they realize that they may have within a living spring of holy desire and love? Does the Spirit bear witness within them that they are God's children? Does He inspire their prayers, and overcome the striving of the flesh? Above all, does He reveal the love and grace of Christ, so that He has become a living, bright reality? If not, then let them follow on the track of the ascending Saviour, and commit to Him their destiny in this life and the next. That moment will witness the awakening of their spiritual life; the scales will fall from their eyes; a new world will open to their view. Peace un-

speakable will keep heart and mind, and they will reiterate the cry of the great Pascal: "Joy! Joy! unspeakable joy!" The Spirit will begin to witness with their spirit, and the living water to flow through their life.

This was the level on which Christ proposed to give the Pentecostal enduement: and this is the level on which alone we can receive the promise of the Father. There is a natural affinity between Spirit and spirit, between the Spirit of God and the spirit of men. Like attracts like. "The natural or psychical man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned; but he that is spiritual discerneth (or understandeth) all things, and he himself is discerned (or understood) by no man."

It was because our Lord knew that those who gathered around Him had fulfilled these conditions, and had been born into union with the unseen and eternal, that He was able to say: "Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you; tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high." . . . "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." And let us remember those great words of George Fox: "If but one man or woman were raised by the Lord's power to stand or live in the same spirit that the apostles and prophets were in, he or she would shake this country for miles around."

The Significance of Christ's Parting Promise

From the earliest times the dynamic of the Holy Spirit has been realized by *individuals,* such as Moses,

Elijah, Isaiah, and the prophets. They were mountain-top men, whose contact with the spiritual and eternal made them saints and seers. They were elect souls, who dwelt apart, breathing the rare air of the highlands. They spake as moved by the Holy Spirit, though sometimes unaware of what the Spirit of Christ, who was in them, did signify. The full mystery of Pentecost was not then made known unto these holy souls as it has now been unfolded through Christ's Ascension. To us it has been revealed that even Gentiles may be fellow-partakers in the experiences of the Spirit-filled life.

This great intention was in the heart of Christ. By assuming our nature, and carrying it through the heavens to the eternal throne, He has placed the Fulness of the Holy Spirit within the reach of all flesh—of old men and children, of young men and maidens, of the laborer who ploughs the brown earth, and the maids who churn the milk. We do not say that He brought a new power into the world, but that He placed world-old and eternal power within the reach of the simplest and humblest souls who were joined to Him by a living faith. Christ had the Church of the Christian centuries in mind when He spoke His farewell discourses, and after His resurrection tarried forty days, speaking the things concerning the Kingdom. It was clearly His intention, now that He was the Head and Representative of His Church, to claim for the whole Church, and especially for its leaders, that same anointing, which fell on Him at His baptism in the Jordan.

Though His human nature was due to the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, He delayed entrance on

His public ministry until that anointing had taken place. The Apostle Peter, in the house of Cornelius, said emphatically that "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power." The Baptist confessed that he would not otherwise have known Him; but He who sent him to baptize had forewarned him that he must watch for One on whom the Spirit descended and abode. This anointing with power which our Lord claimed in the synagogue at Nazareth refers only to His human nature and earthly ministry; for He has been One with the Eternal Spirit in the mystery of the Holy Trinity before time began. But, as the Priest and King of mankind; as the Head of the Body, His Church; as the channel through which the Pentecostal gift was bestowed, it was meet that the Spirit should descend on Him, as by the soft wings of a dove. It was a vast encouragement to the group on the Ascension mount to learn that, as it had been with the Head, so it would be with each member of His mystical body who would claim the same enduement by the exercise of obedience and faith.

The Pathway of Christ's Ascension

From the teaching of the Apostle Paul (Eph. i. 21–23, compared with vi. 12), we gather that, when the cloud hid Him from view, just as the veil fell behind the high priest and hid him on the day of atonement, the ascending Christ was beset with the concentrated opposition of the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. It was as though the whole force of the world of fallen spirits were gathered to bar His upward progress. It was a vain attempt! His course was no more interrupted than a flimsy veil of mist can

alter the course of a sunbeam. He ascended on high, leading captivity captive. As in the triumph of a victorious general through the streets of ancient Rome the conqueror's car was followed by a long train of subdued and captive princes and potentates, so we may picture death, the grave, and the power of Hades as conquered foes, attached to Christ's triumphal progress. "Having put off from himself the principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross."

May we not here make use of the magnificent symbolism of the ancient Psalm, quoted by the apostle: the chariots of God came forth to welcome the returning King, "even thousands upon thousands"? Then they turned to accompany His progress as He approached the Eternal City. We hear the challenging voice of the foremost ranks: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." To the inquiring appeal, "Who is the King of Glory?" the entire crowd of rejoicing angels and saints reply: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle! The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory!" Finally the ancient doors slowly unfold to admit Him. He bears the semblance of our humanity; He is the man Christ Jesus; but on His vesture and on His thigh He hath a name written—*King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!* This is poetry of the sublimest sort; but the truth, which lies beneath, is the sure anchorage of our faith. We know it is true, because we have felt the pull of the rope, the power of the risen, ascended, and glorified Christ! But putting aside this majestic imagery, let us recall the Lord's own promise: "I will

pray, or make request of the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may be with you for ever" . . . "even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father" . . . "if I go, I will send him unto you."

Permit me to put it thus. When our Lord entered the presence-chamber of deity, all created beings dropped behind, as He received the Father's welcome. And when He was asked what reward or guerdon He would claim for His agony to blood, the Saviour answered: "Father, I ask nothing for Myself. It is enough to have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do, and to be assured that redemption is secured for a lost race; but if Thou wilt give aught, I ask that in my human-divine nature that same fulness of the Holy Spirit may reside which I possessed with Thee and Him in the eternal unity of our being before the world was. Thus I shall be able to shed forth the fulness of His grace and help upon My Church, as they were shed on Me when I emerged from the water at My baptism."

Such was our Saviour's prayer. He made request of the Father, as He had promised; and in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared that, being exalted to the right hand of God, He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, which He poured forth on the waiting disciples. This is very significant. Having led captivity captive He besought and obtained this great gift for man; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among us. To adopt the language of the apostle (Col. i. 19; ii. 9): "It pleased the Father that in him, in his mediatorial and representative capacity, all the fulness of the God-

head should dwell, that from *his* fulness we might all receive, and grace for grace." In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead in a corporeal form; and to each one of us who is united to Him by faith a share in that gift was apportioned. Whether we have claimed it or not is another matter. Too many are content to claim their share in Calvary, but never go further to claim their portion in the gift of Pentecost. They are content with the brazen altar and the laver, but never enter the Holy or the Holiest Place.

Ten days passed, during which the faithful lovers and disciples of Christ continued steadfastly and with one accord in prayer until the Day of Pentecost was fully come, and the Lord fulfilled His sure word of promise, "Ye shall receive power."

"Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him, nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

V

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

"This is that."—Acts ii. 16.

WE need not stay to prove the personality of the Holy Spirit. If it were in question, a decisive answer would be afforded by the wording of the circular letter sent from the first Church Council to the daughter churches, which were awaiting guidance. The epistle begins with the august and significant words: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." The obvious interpretation of that inscription is the equal personality of the Holy Spirit with that of the assembled leaders of the Church. He came to act as the Executor of the Godhead, the Conservator of the Truth, the Lord and Giver of life. The day of Pentecost has been described as in a sense His birthday—*dies natalis.* His mission was to constitute the Church as the Body of Christ, to rule and guide it, to add to it those who were being saved, and to reveal to them things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, but which are made known to the Spirit-led.

I have sometimes wondered whether the good Barnabas may not have crossed from his estate in the neighboring isle of Cyprus, to spend a few days with his sister, whose house had, not improbably, been the scene of the Last Supper, in one of its upper rooms. His sister would be early away from the home to the

gathering of the disciples. Her brother and his nephew Mark might have been taking their early meal together, while Rhoda was serving them, when suddenly a startling sound burst on their ears. Hastening from the house, they ran out into the street, expecting that a terrific whirlwind had swept down upon the city. But to their surprise not a single leaf was quivering, not a tree was swaying. The sound had been that of a violent blast of wind; but clearly that was not the explanation; so we may imagine the two men joining with the crowd, as they streamed up the temple steps under the impression that the mysterious sound was in some way associated with a Divine Epiphany. On reaching the temple court they found it crowded with a vast assemblage of at least three thousand people, Jews and proselytes, residents in Jerusalem, and gathered from every quarter of the Empire. Here and there were little groups, each eagerly listening to a discourse in their own language, emanating from lips that seemed touched with a coal of fire. Finally, however, these smaller circles became merged in one great audience, awaiting an authoritative explanation from the leader of the little group, whose faces were illumined by a light that never shone on sea or shore.

May we not suppose that Barnabas would seek an explanation of the scene from a bystander, who might answer in some such words as these: "Clearly you are a stranger in the city, or you would not need to ask that question. This scene is closely related with the history of a wonderful movement, which for the last three years has engrossed the attention of the entire country. Of this movement one known as Jesus

of Nazareth has been the central figure. The eminent purity of His character was combined with an extraordinary wealth of miraculous power, and He had become the idol of the people, especially in the northern districts of this country. Finally He excited the jealousy of the priestly order, who seven weeks ago got the Roman authorities to crucify Him. But the extraordinary fact is that to many of us He has given certain evidence that He arose from His grave, and is still ministering to the needs of men. He promised that He would take steps to enable us to carry on the work which He commenced, and if you will listen to yonder speaker, you will learn all the facts at first-hand." Here John Mark might break in and explain to his uncle what he had heard from his mother of Peter's past history, and his close association with Jesus of Nazareth.

After dismissing the absurd charge of drunkenness, since the day was still young, the speaker commenced his main address by saying *"This is That."*

What Was This?

For ten days the one hundred and twenty loyal souls had awaited the gift of spiritual power which their Lord had promised. Each day as it passed witnessed the same absorbed expectancy. "Not many days," the Lord had said, and therefore any day might be the one on which His gift might be expected. For the world's sake, and for their own, they had continued to claim the fulfilment of the Promise and to rid themselves of every conceivable obstacle to its reception. It would appear that on this special day, when in the temple the priest presented the first loaves of the new

harvest to the Almighty, that they had risen from their knees, and were sitting in an expectant attitude. Then suddenly they saw tongue-like flames distributing themselves, one resting on the head of each, and they were all anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit. The same experience befell them as had befallen their great Leader when He was baptized. That had been His Pentecost, as this became their baptism. Each looked at the rest, admiring their halo of fire, not daring to suppose that he or she was also similarly blessed. From the beginning the Holy Spirit had brooded over the chaos of the elements and of human society, but now for the first time, as we have seen, He created the nucleus of the Body of Christ, and laid the foundations of the One Holy Mystical Church, according to Christ's word: "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

That, on the other hand, was the prediction of the prophet Joel, who foretold that the hour would come when slaves and slave-girls would break forth into prophecy; and that amid the convulsions of nature and the fall of empires vast numbers would call on the Name of the Lord, and crowd through the gates of salvation. Peter, in the scene before him, perceived the actual fulfilment of that ancient prophecy.

If Barnabas were there that day, he must have been deeply moved. The name, "Son of Consolation," by which he was afterwards known, suggests his highly strung and tender nature; and he must have been very sensitive to the warm waters of Love, which seemed to be let loose over that spellbound assembly. He had never experienced the like of it before. Here was that comfort in Christ, that fellowship of the Spirit,

those tender mercies and compassions, of which he was so often to hear from the lips of his old comrade in the University of Tarsus, as they travelled together in the power of the same Spirit, whose descent on the infant Church was accomplished before his eyes.

Thus was fulfilled the Saviour's promise that they should receive power, the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon them.

But we sorrowfully confess to-day that *This is not That.* The professing Church, as we know it, is far removed from her Pentecostal prototype. *That* was united; *this* is divided into an infinite number of sects. *That* was full of triumphant joy; whilst *this* gets choirs to sing for her. *That* made little of material wealth; *this* pays court to it. *That* was characterized by simplicity of method, as each member said to neighbor and brother, "Know the Lord"; whilst *this* substitutes paid agents to perform the work of evangelization and soul-winning. *That* was a commonwealth of mutual helpfulness; in *this* class distinctions are permitted and observed. No greater contrast between *that* and *this* could be adduced than the brief sentences which describe the Church's infancy, when the Lord added to her daily those who were being saved, and the endeavor of large numbers of modern Christian communities which attract audiences by an ornate ritual, or popular oration on the topics of the day, or adventitious attractions which savor of the dancing academy or the club. When at Colombo an extract from a Buddhist paper was shown to me in which a correspondent cited such things as "the ruses" adopted in England to induce people to attend church. There are vast numbers of significant exceptions,

where buildings are crowded and the Gospel is still proved to be the power of God to salvation; but speaking generally, with the facts of church decline before us, we are sorrowfully compelled to confess that *This is not That.*

This Might Be That

The apostle did not say that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled. He clearly realized that the scene before him was only the first instalment towards its fulfilment. The gift of the Holy Spirit has never been withdrawn; and indeed miracles are happening to-day in the hearts of sinners which are as wonderful as anything that has ever taken place in the history of the Church. The river of God flows on in its glorious fulness, but the professing Church has removed from its banks, and is creating a new settlement on the edge of a desert. How disastrous is this experiment! It is very bitter to state the matter thus; very bitter to draw a distinction between the professing Church and the hidden Church; very bitter to suggest that any among us are forsaking the fountain of living waters for cisterns that can hold none. Yet an instant alteration might be effected, if only the leaders of the Churches, both ministers and laymen, and indeed the membership as a whole, would turn once more to those stores of blessing which await us in "the residue of the Spirit."

The following notable instances encourage the faith that God's arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear.

One Saturday afternoon Christmas Evans, the famous Welsh preacher, was ascending Cader Idris on his way to a preaching engagement on the following

day. He records that he was suddenly "convicted of a cold heart," and as the road was lonely he tethered his horse, went some distance apart, and cast himself before God in an agony of self-despair. He confessed his own sins, and those of the churches under his care. The fountains of the deeps within were broken up. His tears came thick and fast, followed by a baptism of love and power, which affected the whole of his subsequent ministry, and led to a revival of religion throughout the principality.

The Rev. C. M. Birrell, of Liverpool, who was a fellow-student with Murray McCheyne, the Bonars, and W. C. Burns, once told me of a conversation which as a young man had passed between himself and the mother of W. C. Burns, in which she gave him the key to the great revival, which touched the whole of Scotland. When she went to her son's room in the early morning to call him to his breakfast, she found him lying on the floor, where he had lain all night, detained by the Spirit of God, and oblivious to the flight of time. "Mother," he said, "God has given me Kilsyth to-day." Yes, and not only Kilsyth, with one hundred saved that afternoon, but Scotland, and then Inland China, where he and Hudson Taylor wrought together.

Sitting with D. L. Moody, under the veranda of his home in Northfield, one Sunday morning, he gave me the following experience. Shortly after his conversion, he took the big market-hall in Chicago and gathered a vast crowd of hearers for his Sunday evening service, but with comparatively small results. A group of Christian women used to occupy the front seats, and as he descended from the platform they

would say something to this effect: "Very good, Mr. Moody, very good; but there is something better, and we are praying for you." He often questioned what they referred to. Wasn't the hall crowded? Were there not signs of God's blessing in renovated lives? But one summer afternoon as he was passing along Fifth Avenue, New York, he felt that he must get alone with God, so went to the house of a friend and asked for the use of a room that he might be alone. He put aside the offers of hospitality and refreshment, and locked the door against interruption. In that sacred hour he yielded his whole being afresh to Christ, and received the baptism of power. On the following Sunday evening, the Spirit of God moved his audience with such mighty power that the women who had prayed for him, with tears and smiles, said, "Ah, Mr. Moody, you have got it now!" That was the beginning of a ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, which was destined to affect the world.

But perhaps the outstanding incident of all is that recorded of John Wesley on his return from his residence in America, which had not been marked by any outstanding features. He met Peter Bohler, a Moravian, at a religious gathering in Aldersgate Street, and afterwards accompanied him to Herrnhut, where, on the invitation of Count Zinzendorf, the consecrated and missionary-hearted Moravian Church had found its home. It was there that he entered on the experience of Pentecost, and on his return to London invited the Aldersgate group to meet him one afternoon at the Moravian Church in Fetter Lane. At that memorable meeting, in addition to himself, were his brother Charles, Whitefield, and others whose

names were destined to shine as stars. After they had continued for some hours in fellowship and prayer, they became conscious of the mystic presence of the Holy Spirit, and fell on their faces in reverent worship, after which they arose and sang the Te Deum. On the next morning, Whitefield took the early coach to Bristol, and the Great Revival, the celestial fire of which saved Britain from the false fire of the French Revolution, broke out.

This Shall Be That

Why should not every minister and Christian worker who reads these lines arrange to spend one day at least alone with God in quiet self-examination? Are we experimentally possessed of the Pentecostal enduement? Are we willing to pay the price of it? Are we willing, if needs be, to surrender reputation, position, even the favor of our immediate clientele, in order that the channel-bed may be cleared for the River of God? There is a sense in which we have to lay at the feet of our Lord "life's glory dead," before we can claim "life that shall endless be." But, be it remembered, that whatever we surrender in the psychical or natural, the soulish level, will be given back with enhanced power and beauty on the spiritual. A story is told of a man who fell down a well but managed to grasp the end of a suspended rope. He held on until his strength gave out, and then found that he had only six inches to drop! How often we dread letting go! But it is only when we have let go that we find peace and power.

It may be suggested that the illustrious names which have been mentioned are landmarks in the history of

the Church, and that our natures are cast in a smaller mold. But is it not a fact that they were by nature much as we are, and that they became "God's mighties" only because they became the channels of the Holy Spirit? Samson was so ordinary a man that even Delilah was ignorant of the secret of his great strength. It depended, as we know, on that absolute consecration to God, which laid open his physical nature to superhuman energy. "They that wait on the Lord exchange their strength for his."

I am well aware that discredit has been brought on a present-day experience of the Pentecostal blessing by two movements, to which, without the least unkindness in my heart, I wish to allude.

One of these is the Pentecostal movement, which, so far as I understand it, has made the Spirit of Pentecost its figure-head. It was instituted and is led by very holy people, from whom there is much to be learned; but I am persuaded that it is a mistake to make an experience of the Holy Spirit, or indeed the Holy Spirit Himself, the objective of a religious movement. In the present dispensation the one aim of the blessed Comforter is to glorify Jesus Christ, and He shrinks from any attempt, however well meant, to divert our thought from Him who must ever be the Alpha and Omega of our faith.

The other is the tongue-movement, as it is called. Concerning this I would ask these questions:

1. Do those who profess to speak with tongues exercise their gift for the glory of Jesus, the edification of the Church, and the convincement of unbelievers, or for their personal edification?

2. Have they learned to distinguish between the psychical and the spiritual?
3. Are they always careful, before they give way to the prompting, to be sure that an interpreter is present, according to the apostle's clear injunction (1 Cor. xiv. 28)?
4. Have they learned to control their own spirits, and keep silent, if three others have spoken (1 Cor. xiv. 29)?
5. Do women keep silent?

If people carefully acted upon the apostle's injunctions contained in that memorable chapter, it is my humble opinion that this movement would cease its divisive, and, in many cases, disastrous work. Let it be remembered that a tree must be judged by its fruits.

Every movement must fail in the scrutiny of the judgment seat of Christ, which has failed to promote the glory of Jesus, the edification of believers, the salvation of the lost, and notably the spirit of love. The apostle put 1 Cor. xiii. before xiv., and bids us all make perfect love our aim.

After all, love must be the supreme test, and whatever divides and rends the Church of Christ carries on its front the brand of Satan; for we need always to remember that even he can assume the appearance of an angel of light.

But the fact that a good thing may be misunderstood or abused is no argument against the thing itself. After all, it is the supreme value of a golden coinage that leads men to counterfeit it; but who would be so foolish as to refuse a gold piece because some counterfeits may be in circulation?

Let us then take the following steps, suggested by the saintly Andrew Murray:

1. I believe that there is a Pentecostal blessing to be received: the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and the enduement with power.
2. It is for me.
3. I have never received it; or if I received it once I have lost it.
4. I long and desire to have it at all cost; and am prepared to surrender whatever hinders.
5. I do now humbly and thankfully open my heart to receive all that I believe my Saviour is waiting to give; and even if there be no resulting emotion, I will still believe that I have received according to Mark xi. 24.

If there is any difficulty in making a full surrender (see step 4 above), I suggest that if you are not willing to give up the key of some special door, which you have hitherto kept closed against Christ, that you should tell Him that you are willing to be made willing, and cast on Him the responsibility of dealing with that special difficulty. When dealing with your own case or the case of others, the one matter that claims imperative and primary consideration is the will; when that takes Christ's side, you may trust Him to deal with the hindrance or sin; and He will.

As to steps, I trust that I may not be charged with egotism, if I reprint part of a tractlet by Dr. Chapman: "Two or three years ago, Mr. Moody invited me to breakfast at his home in Northfield. I got to the house before the breakfast hour, and met Dr. Meyer beneath a great tree in front of the house. I said to him, 'What is the matter with me? So many times I

seem half empty, and so many times utterly powerless: what is the matter?' He put his hand on my shoulder, and said: 'Have you ever tried to breathe out three times without breathing in once?' I wondered if he was referring to some new breathing exercise, so I said, 'I do not think I have.' 'Well,' he said, 'try it.' So I breathed out once, and then I had to breathe in again. Then he said: 'You must always breathe in before you can breathe out, and your breathing out must always be in proportion to your breathing in.' Then he said: 'Good morning,' and I went on into Mr. Moody's house. But I had had my lesson, and knew that I had been trying to breathe out more than I had breathed in. That is the trouble with ninety-nine out of every hundred ministers. We must breathe in, and in, and in again. When we do that we are kept full, and there is power only in the fulness."

All that we can wish for ourselves and others seems summed up in that wonderful outburst of Tersteegen:

"His priest am I, before Him day and night,
Within His Holy Place;
And Death, and Life, and all things dark and bright,
I spread before His Face.
Rejoicing with His joy, yet ever still,
For silence is my song;
My work to bend beneath His blessed will,
All day, and all night long—
For ever holding with Him converse sweet,
Yet speechless, for my gladness is complete."

VI

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."
—Rom. viii. 2.

BEFORE proceeding further let us say, for the purpose of emphasizing the fact, that the enduement and energy of the Holy Spirit are governed by law. They are not won primarily by an agony of prayer, nor characterized necessarily by intense emotion, but by our careful obedience to the conditions and laws which govern their operation. That prayer and emotion will sooner or later visit the soul which has claimed the portion from the Ascended Saviour is certain, but these are incidental. The primary condition is the "obedience of faith." Two citations from the New Testament place this beyond doubt. In his final address to the Sanhedrin, Peter asserted that the Holy Spirit is given to those who *obey;* while in the epistle to the Galatians, Paul teaches that we receive the promise of the Spirit by *faith.*

It is true that our Lord compared the action of the Holy Spirit on its subject to the wind that bloweth where it listeth, and it is true that we know not the plains over which it has swept nor the seas over which it may go; but we are sure that the winds obey law, equally with the seasons and the tides. From the daily press we learn that the course of the wind in a given locality is predicted by meteorological science, and we

know that this could not be done if the winds were left to their own lawless way.

"All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee,
All chance, direction that thou canst not see!"

An Analogy

The outstanding distinction between what we know as civilization and the life of the aboriginal native consists in our employment of those great natural forces, of which the child-races were ignorant, or before which they trembled. They fulfilled their purpose by the skill and energy of their physical constitution. Their deft hand, strong muscle, swift foot, supplied their simple wants. We, on the other hand, the children of this highly civilized age, have learned to yoke an infinite number of forces to the chariot of progress. We have compelled these Boanergic Samsons to surrender the secret of their strength and toil for us in their prison-houses. The *native* paddles his own canoe; *we* sit at our ease, and are borne across the ocean by the actinic rays of the sun, stolen from his beams by primeval forests, and imprisoned for untold ages in the cellars of the earth.

These natural forces had always been within man's reach, throbbing in the atmosphere, or imprisoned in the earth; but they evaded capture, because the child-races did not set themselves to discover the conditions or laws by which they were controlled. Day unto day uttered speech, night unto night whispered knowledge, but untutored man failed to understand. He did not set himself to spell out their language, or to extract their secret.

Then a new era dawned. Men suddenly awoke to discover the uniformity of Nature's action. May we not believe that the divine Spirit girded men like Galileo, Newton, Pascal, Stephenson, Marconi, as He did Cyrus of old? By close observation they have deciphered the hieroglyphics of creation, and have invented machinery which so precisely fulfils the principles on which these Titan forces operate, that they have no option but to toil in our service and do our bidding. They are very imperious. If there is the least flaw in our obedience, they are obdurate in refusing their help. Your wife or child may be dying, but your motor will not carry you to their side if in the smallest degree you have slurred or evaded the conditions on which the petrol is prepared to act. But when we fulfil her conditions, Nature will sweat in our factories, propel our ships, drag our railway trains, flash our messages, and broadcast our music or our speech.

When we speak thus of these mighty forces and the laws which govern their operation, we must never forget that they are the expression of the mind of the Creator, and communicate the pulse of His power. Their laws are promulgated by His will. "He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast." There can be no thoughts without a thinker; no energy without a personal agent. They, therefore, who work in factories or laboratories should be as reverent as those who preach in pulpits, for if they only understand their calling, they also are fellow-workers with God. Now, just as God has put forth His energy on the lowest level of natural forces, and has impressed on each of them their several laws, so He has put forth

His energy on the highest level, the level of the spiritual, and on that also He has impressed the law of its operation. The analogy is perfect.

It has been suggested that this conception of the spiritual kingdom underlay Daniel's suggestion to Nebuchadnezzar that "the Heavens do rule"; and that both John the Baptist and our Lord referred to it when they announced the near advent of the Kingdom of Heaven, or, as Luke puts it, of God. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that, in this sense, Jesus Christ is the Door, and that for all who believe in Him He has opened the way to reservoirs of power which can never be exhausted. The simplest and humblest may set in motion waves of holy influence which change the face of continents! How else can we account for the effect of the life-work of Luther, Wesley, Hudson Taylor, or D. L. Moody?

Paul is never weary of insisting that the results of his life-work were not due to the persuasive words of human wisdom. He refused to employ excellency of speech when proclaiming the mystery of God. Though he walked in the flesh, he did not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of his warfare were not of the flesh, but mighty before God for the casting down of strongholds, and for bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. His sole reliance was on the indwelling, outflowing, and demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. Has there not been a grave decline from this position on the part of many who occupy the pulpit at the present hour? They are earnest students, they are careful in the preparation of their sermons, they are painstaking in the exercise of their responsible duties, but they are

breaking their hearts in disappointment, because they do not avail themselves of their resources in the Risen Christ.

Two Significant Prepositions

There are two directions in which, specially, the Power of the Holy Spirit can be experienced. When Barnabas and Paul returned from their first missionary journey, they accounted for the extraordinary results which had accrued from their labors by rehearsing what God had done by, or *through* them, and all things that He had done *with,* or *in partnership with them.* It was *He* who had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. These two prepositions are clearly distinguished in the Greek original and are luminous with meaning.

(1) *The Holy Spirit is prepared to work through the nature which is yielded to Him.* This does not imply that we become automatons. At every moment we are called upon to exercise our will and choice, but we cultivate the habit of asking Him to illuminate our mind, suggest our thought, and direct our speech. "He that is of God heareth the words of God." This has been the happy experience of many of God's chosen instruments. For instance, Hudson Taylor, one Sunday morning, while walking along the seashore at Brighton, England, heard the inner voice, which he knew so well, say to him: "Hudson Taylor, I am going to evangelize Inland China, and if you will walk with Me, I will do it through you."

As a young man, D. L. Moody was walking with two men of God in the Merrion Gardens, Dublin, and heard one say to the other: "The modern world has

yet to learn what God can do through a man who is wholly yielded to Him." He left them at once, and going to his bedroom in the hotel, consecrated his manhood to God with the cry: "Let this be true of me, as I yield my whole being for Thy use."

Dr. Wilbur Chapman, the well-known evangelist, often narrated the following incident. When he was fulfilling the work of the ministry at Wanamaker Church, Philadelphia, he became so discouraged with the paucity of the results, that one Monday morning he began to write a letter of resignation. He felt that he had better return to a business life than fail to meet the requirements of that important sphere. While the ink was still wet, the servant brought in the morning newspaper, which contained an address of my own delivered at the Northfield conference, in which I had happened to say that the work which really counts is not that which we do for God, but which He does through us. That sentence revolutionized his life. As soon as the servant had retired, he knelt at his table and asked that from that hour his whole nature might be so absolutely at God's disposal as to be the pure channel for the living water, or, as the early Christians used to say, what a man's hand is to himself. This was the intelligent act of a surrendered will. To do God's will became henceforward the origin, motive, and gladness of his life. I heard him tell this story to a great company of ministers gathered in the ancient Indian forest at Winona, and shall never forget the profound impression it produced. Scores of them, as they passed out of the forest through the gateway which led back to the town, said as they gripped our hands: "No longer for Him, but He

through my yielded will." I learned afterwards that revivals broke out in several directions through the western states, as the result of that meeting.

(2) *But those who are thus surrendered to God may also confidently count on the coöperation of the Holy Spirit.*—The Greek word rendered in the English as "communion" is the same as that used of the partnership of James and John with Peter in the fishing trade (2 Cor. xiii. 14; Luke v. 7). When we go forth to catch men for God, we may count on the partnership of the Holy Spirit. When we stand on our trial, as Peter and John did before the Sanhedrin, we may cite the co-witness of the Paraclete, whom we summon to stand by our side. When we affirm the great truths of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit's "Yea" will be forthcoming, affirming the truth. It is repeatedly said of the heroes and saints in Hebrews xi. that they had witness borne to them.

How often in my ministry—if I may be allowed to speak of my own experience—have I had some such experience as Peter had, when, against all the rules of his craft, he let down his nets in the glare of the moon, because Christ bade it. But He, who gave the command against all precedent, filled the nets to breaking. Then, as Peter strained every muscle to hold the heavily laden net, he became aware of the marvellous share contributed by that silent Man who sat in the stern. May I not appeal to all Christian workers to place themselves and their boats at the disposal of Jesus Christ? Obey His orders; reckon on His enabling; be assured of His coöperation through the Holy Spirit; and you will find the nets breaking with the weight of a success which will

humble you before Him, and elicit the confession of your profound unworthiness!

This conception of the coöperation of the Holy Spirit is specially applicable to those who are set over regular congregations of faithful people. It is interesting to note that Cardinal Manning, in his treatise on "The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," lays great emphasis on the word "sat" in Acts ii. 3. He says that when the one Paraclete or Advocate took the seat at the right hand of God, the other descended to the seat or throne of the Church; and that this was the origin of the phrase "the Holy See" (from the Latin verb *sedere,* to sit). We will not argue the point as concerning the Church of Rome, but we may appropriate the thought in connection with any stated gathering of believers met in the Name of Christ. Wherever such a gathering is found, there the Holy Spirit broods, and as the servant of God proclaims the Word of Truth, the Spirit authenticates and enforces it, so that if there came in one who is unbelieving and unlearned, he is convicted and judged by all he hears; the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and "so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is present indeed."

When this thought lays hold on a minister of Christ, he realizes the necessity of maintaining the purity of the Church, that no permitted evil may grieve or quench the coöperation of his great Ally. It was this that led Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston to dismiss an operatic quartette, which had led the singing of his congregation, but were notoriously irreligious; and to discontinue raising church funds by ice cream suppers, which were scenes of unworthy vanity and display.

The platform from which the Holy Spirit operates must be cleansed of all that would neutralize His help.

One of the most conspicuous instances of the coöperation of the Holy Spirit is that furnished in the house of Cornelius. We are told (Acts xi. 15) that when Peter *began* to speak the Holy Spirit fell on the assembled Church. It was an august occasion, designed to prove that the gift of Pentecost was intended, not for Jews and proselytes only, but for the great world of men. As Joppa looked out on the Mediterranean, which washed the shores of the Gentile world, so that interruption of his address by the Spirit of God was intended to accentuate the divine purpose of including the whole Gentile world in that supreme donation.

What Peter intended to say, in addition to his great opening words, must be left to conjecture. It was as though the Spirit said: "Stand aside; thou hast opened well, I will now take up and conclude thy discourse!" Happy would it be if we were subject to similar interruption! This surely is the co-partnership of the Holy Spirit, the alliance between the human and the divine agents in the evangelization of the world.

We ought to add a sentence here to the effect that the Holy Spirit's ministry is not limited to His work *through* and *with* His chosen instrument, but enhances our own powers. When a piece of dull coal is baptized in flame, the heat releases the latent energy received centuries before from the sunbeams in the primeval world. So, when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire, as John the Baptist predicted, the love of God releases as well as imparts. He re-

leases vast moral energies which had been stored in our subconscious nature; and we realize the possibility of fulfilling the inspiring commission of one of the greatest missionaries the world has ever seen: "Go! Set the whole world on fire and in flames!"

The Presence and Work of the Holy Spirit are always associated with our consciousness of Christ. "He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and declare it unto you." In the present dispensation the whole object of the Spirit's work is to shed light upon the face of Jesus. I can never forget a young Glasgow merchant breaking in on a discussion of theological students by saying: "I have a factory and a private counting-house, and if ever I lose the sense of the presence of Christ, I go alone, lock the door, and ask the Holy Spirit to show me wherein I have grieved Him and caused Him to withdraw His light from the face of my Lord; and when I have learned it, I go back to the place where I dropped the thread of obedience and confess my fault. I have unbroken fellowship with my Lord; for the work of the Spirit is to make Jesus a living, bright reality." We broke up in tumultuous joy, and went to our several homes, and to one at least of the group there was so deep a realization of Christ that he walked round and round the table, on which the untasted supper was laid, saying, "The Lord whom I sought has suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, in whom I delight."

Clearly the sculptor of the monument of Phillips Brooks, which stands hard by the church in Boston where he exercised one of the greatest ministries of modern times, must have had something of the same

in mind when he carved in the same pulpit a figure of the bishop in his characteristic attitude, with his Master standing just behind him, with His hand on His servant's shoulder. The Holy Spirit in the great preacher's heart made him aware of his Lord close by, and would enable him to magnify Him to the people as he proclaimed the evangel of His truth and grace.

In one of the sweet idylls of the long ago, we are told that Abraham sent the trusted steward of his household to fetch a bride for Isaac from the ancestral home in the Euphrates valley. The old man's artless narrative, the evident indications of God's guiding Providence, and the gleam of the precious gifts won the maiden's heart, and she arose with her damsels to become the wife of his master's son. We can imagine that during that long journey Eliezer would walk beside her camel and tell everything he could remember of Isaac from his birth and upwards. His whole conversation circled about her bridegroom, and the girl's heart had already given him its love before he claimed it in person. In their greeting the steward was almost forgotten; and if, in after days, Rebekah inquired more particularly about him, might not Isaac have reminded her that for six weeks she had enjoyed his company, and that surely that had afforded ample opportunity for her to make his acquaintance? But she might have answered very readily: "Indeed, husband, he never gave me the chance to learn anything about himself, because his one theme was You. He never ceased to talk about You, and always turned the conversation back to the Man on whose errand he had come." This is a kind of allegory of the ministry

of the Holy Spirit. He has come to woo the Church for her Bridegroom; therefore He hides Himself lest He might distract us from the utmost loyalty and love to Christ that we are capable of giving. But, in some future age, we shall perhaps know Him in His own glorious Being.

A Needful Caution

A modern school of thought, which is obtaining considerable vogue, holds that God is within each of us, in the depths of our subconscious self, and that it is possible for any one to draw on this hidden reservoir of power and vitality. A formula has been suggested for general use, which has at least the merit of substituting a healthy and hopeful outlook for the pessimism and depression of protracted ill-health. But this system falls far short of the teachings of the New Testament. The difference between them is that between a cistern and a spring. You may exhaust the one, but the other is fed from the mountains, and is perennial.

Each soul has a moral sense which naturally points to God as the infinite source of righteousness and well-being. As the needle points to the pole, so does conscience imply the existence of the Creator; but this instinctive recognition is far removed from the teachings of Christ, who promised that the Father would come with Him to find a home in the heart of obedient faith. "If a man love me, he will keep my word and the Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him." This would be no boon, if by nature God were resident within. In his carefully worded address, Paul spoke of God as not far from

any one of us, but this is a very different position to that of auto-suggestion. We live, and move, and have our being in God; but He stands at the door and knocks! By nature, according to the New Testament, man is "without God in the world." Before we can draw at will on the divine resources we must become partakers of the divine nature. Then only will the eternal spring arise perennially.

"*If there be any Fellowship of the Spirit. . . .*" Those who reckon most of the "fellowship of the Spirit" in their public ministration and service to the world, will be characterized by deep humility. If their faces shine, they will not wist it. If garlands of adulation and praise are offered them, they will immediately hand them over to their Lord. Like John the Baptist, they will be glad to decrease and be forgotten, if only Jesus is loved, trusted, and exalted.

They will also be much in prayer. Sometimes they will simply lie, like John, on the Master's bosom. At other times they will be pleading for souls with strong cryings and tears. And again they will be wrestling beside the Jabbok, refusing to let the Angel go until He has blessed them. The Spirit travaileth within them with groanings that cannot be uttered, as He leads them to sympathize in the deep schemes and purposes of the Almighty.

They will enjoy a delightful freedom from the weary chains of moods, of fears for the future, and anxiety for the present. They will live in the warm zone of the love of God, and be anointed with the oil of joy. The garment of heaviness will be exchanged for that of praise. The traces of worry and fretting care will disappear from their countenance, and the

peace of God will sentinel their heart and mind. They shall delight themselves in the Almighty and lift up their faces to God, and all things become new. Beholding and reflecting the glory of Jesus, they will be changed into the same image. Weights will be abandoned and besetting sins will be conquered. There will be a growing tenderness and sweetness, with new strength and courage. Forgetting things behind, they will press on to apprehend that for which they were apprehended of Christ Jesus. The "All of self and none of Thee" will become exchanged for "None of self and all of Thee." The channel beds will deepen and the banks widen as such draw nearer to the eternal ocean. Then it will be said of them as of another of God's chosen saints: "That having completed forty years of his age and twenty of service, he passed away to the Lord Jesus, whom he loved with his whole heart, with his whole mind, with his whole strength, following Him most perfectly, and running after Him most swiftly, and at the last reaching Him most gloriously, who, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever!"

The Word of Christ will dwell in them richly. To them it will be as God's dictaphone; and they will read off what His Spirit has spoken throughout its sacred contents. It will be in their heart and on their lips. Containing as it does the results of those explorations of God's nature which were achieved by the saints of old, it will incite them to tread in their tracks, verifying and discovering for themselves. For them fresh light will be ever breaking forth from God's Word. To their spiritual senses it will be luminous with an inner beauty, and sweeter than honey to the

taste. Those who knew Dr. Maclaren of Manchester intimately bear witness that whatever guests might be visiting his home, he would excuse himself from their company between nine and ten A. M., that he might sit quietly in his study with the English Bible on his knee, meditating on its familiar pages until they yielded their precious ore.

But above all, there will be a growing conformity to Christ. Old things will pass away, and you will learn to receive that abundance of grace which made a Luther, a Knox, a Ridley Havergal, a Spurgeon, and a Moody. The stream is flowing past your door, but you must utilize its power to drive your water-wheel. The same electricity is in the air, but you must learn to yoke it to your life. The freight-train is in the station, waiting to be unloaded; the ship is in the dock, waiting for its discharge. Take, take, of the Water of Life, freely!

VII

WITH THEE IS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

JOHN iv.

ONE morning, when the land was carpeted with flowers, a woman awoke in the little town of Sychar, that lay in the lap of the twin mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. She little realized that that day would revolutionize not only her own life, but the lives of her people, and of untold thousands besides. Through its happenings her story would be embalmed in the history of the race, and she would take the first step in the pathway which, as tradition says, ended in martyrdom.

Her nature was passionate and intense. The well was deep! She had endeavored to satisfy her heart with human love, but in vain. Man after man had deceived her. She had had five husbands, and was at that time living in illicit union with one who was not her husband. She had lost faith in human nature. The men had played with her affections and then cast her aside. She had ceased to believe in love. The spring-tide of her life had passed into the sere and yellow leaf of autumn. Her character was gone. Her sister women would not brook her presence at the old well that lay outside the town, a quarter of a mile down the slope, where the ancient direct road travelled from south to north. Indeed, so great was the

antipathy manifested to her by the matrons and girlhood of the community, that she had no alternative but to carry her pitcher to the well in the sultry noon instead of in the cool of the late afternoon.

She was not destitute of religion. There was the ancient tradition of Jacob's faith; for he had lived within sight of these hills and had drunk of that old well. She believed in the God of Abraham and Jacob; and did not suppose that there could be an advance on that patriarchal faith, which existed in sublime simplicity before the division between Jew and Samaritan, between Jerusalem and Gerizim. She refused to believe in any teacher who presumed to promulgate views in advance of the old-world monotheism, which had descended from the days of the patriarchs. It was impossible to suppose that there was any human teacher greater than their ancestor Jacob, who had digged the well, and had drunk thereof himself. She believed what he believed. Surely that was enough! She had heard many discussions as to the rival claims of the temples at Jerusalem and Gerizim, and she had a languid interest in the arguments that supported the claims of the latter. She also believed that some day the long-looked-for Messiah would appear, and explain all things. In the meanwhile, she was weary and sick at heart. Her daily lonely visit to that well seemed to epitomize her inner experience of heart-sickness and ennui. "Give me, stranger," she seemed to say, "anything which will appease this parching soul-thirst, and restore to me the years that the locust and cankerworm have eaten; so that I need not thirst, nor come all the way hither to draw." Is she not the type of myriads in the

present day, who have drunk of all the wells excavated by human hands, and have found them brackish or empty? They have turned from them all with the ancient verdict of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Not that they have lost faith in the God of the fallen, but the belief is cold and abstract. They are quite prepared to defend the claims of Jerusalem or Gerizim. They have a vague idea that there is a phase of religion which has lit up some dear lives which have passed from them into the unseen, but surely it cannot come to them!

What is the use of brilliant essays for such? How can ornate ceremonies or sensuous appeals satisfy and quiet the distraught soul? Our churches and pulpits will fail utterly to satisfy and help men and women who are disillusioned and weary, if they are unable to lead them to those living springs of eternal life, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst again. But these springs arise in earth's lowlands, because they are fed from the uplands of the divine nature. Any who drink of that water shall never thirst, but it shall be a spring arising to God, its Source. Spirit to Spirit! This was the supreme lesson which our Lord came to teach, and He must needs pass through Samaria, because there was one human being whose bitter experiences had made her receptive. He came to complete the circuit between the eternal springs and her parched soul, leading her from the soulish to the spiritual, from speculation to experience, and from the waterless wilderness to a land of springs of water, gushing out from valleys and hills. Is not this what men are longing for to-day? The ebb of people from the churches does not prove that they are becoming

more irreligious, but that the religion which they provide does not satisfy.

These, then, are the conclusions to which this profound chapter leads us:

1. *God is Spirit.* When we have said this we have advanced but little with the mystery of the divine nature. How true was that inscription on the portico of the ancient Egyptian temple: "I am He that was, and is, and shall be; but no man hath lifted My veil"! In the prologue to the fourth Gospel the beloved apostle makes a similar statement: "No man hath seen God at any time." But we can at least understand the Saviour's words, that the Father is ever seeking for those who will worship Him in spirit. Obscure, forgotten, ignored, unrecognized by men and cast out of their society, the Eternal comes and makes His abode with them. Be not afraid! God is Spirit, but He is "the Father." It is on this phase of His nature that George Fox and the Quaker saints have laid stress, and it is very wonderful how mysteriously real God's spiritual manifestations are to those who worship in the spirit.

2. *We also, in the noblest department of our nature, are akin to Him. We also are spirits.* As we have seen, there is in each of us a Holy of Holies, where the Shechinah should shine, a throne-room which the King should inhabit. It was when John was "in the spirit" that he saw. It is the organ of the divine! The seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans deals, as we shall see presently, with the religion of the soul. It is the story of a psychic conflict with the flesh, which ends in disappointment and defeat. The eighth chapter, on the other hand, delineates the re-

ligion of the spirit; it urges us to be spiritually minded as the condition of life and peace, and it promises that the Spirit of God will bear witness with our own spirit, that we are children of God. True worship, such as God seeks, must emanate from the spirit of the worshipper. Is it irreverent to suppose that on each Lord's Day the divine Spirit moves eagerly through cathedrals and churches, searching for loyal and true hearts that are offering the incense of the heart's love, the rhythm of their accordance with His own? It may be that He turns away from many of our anthems and prayers, which please the taste but never reach beyond the vaulted roof. It might be well at this point to read Isaiah i.

3. *True religion is the union of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man in and through Jesus Christ.* "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and man; and we find Him engaged in this blessed work in the case of this woman. When He is the object of our thought and love, we touch the Father of Spirits and live. He reveals the Father, unites us with the Father, comes with the Father to make His home with us. They who are most filled with the Spirit are most occupied with the Son; and they who have the Son have the Father also. This is the clear teaching of the beloved John in his first Epistle. He states the case unmistakably thus: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also." Also in the second epistle: "He that abideth in the teaching of Christ, the same hath both the Father and the Son." Some inkling of this seems to have occurred to the woman herself, when

she said that presently Christ would come, and He would reveal all things. Could this wonderful man who read the secrets of her life Himself be the Christ?

4. (*a*) *Thus our religious life becomes a Spring.* The woman was constantly referring to the *pit;* our Lord spoke of the *spring* in the pit. She spoke of the fatigue of drawing up; He of the rising up. Is not this the distinction between the religion which depends on outward ordinances and other people's experiences, and the religion which Christ generates in our hearts? With too many, religion is not spontaneous, but derived. They must have their weekly sacrament, their rousing preacher, their shelf of religious stimulants. Their religious experience is at second-hand. They are constantly lowering their pitcher into their minister's heart and brain, but sometimes the vessel is upset before they reach home, and sometimes its contents are slightly brackish!

All these aids to the religious life have their place. The church, the sacrament, the common worship, the carefully prepared and inspiring sermon, the religious books; but the mistake arises, when we are content with these means of grace, instead of passing through and beyond them to the fountains of grace themselves. In other words, we do not meditate. We should learn from the ruminant cattle not merely to swallow, but to chew the cud!

Even the early morning hour may become irksome, unless we have learned to practise the secret of waiting quietly before God until the silt drops to the bottom, and our nature becomes hushed and expectant before Him. Then take your Bible in your hand and ask the Spirit to illuminate the page, and lead you into all the

truth. Ask Him to help your infirmity in prayer, and to pray within you and with you according to God's will.

(*b*) This comparison with a spring suggests *the verdure and beauty of nature.* What a variety of vegetation grows in a dell, in the midst of which a perennial fountain rises, scattering its spray! So, when the spirit is infilled with the Spirit of God, the results react on the whole of our wonderful nature. Our life becomes attuned to the whole world of reality, and therefore of natural beauty.

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green,
Something shines in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen;

Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with brighter beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine."

When the love of Christ indwells, it sheds a radiance on everything. When the burnt-offering begins, the song of the Lord begins also. The quickened life of the spirit involves all our activities and correspondences. We walk again the paths of Paradise, and tread the green sward of Eden. Life becomes sacramental and transfigured. We feel that the new heaven and the new earth have come, and that the tabernacle of God is with men. A true life is a whole life. The excisions are only of the evils which blinded our sight and paralyzed our movements. We understand what is meant by the words: "If any man be

in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new." When the spring arises within, our whole nature becomes a watered garden.

5. *Whatever impedes the uprising of the Fountain must be put away.* A curious incident happened in connection with the college buildings at Cliff, in Derbyshire, with which I was at that time connected. The house was filled with students and visitors, when, to our dismay, the entire water-supply was stopped. We made every effort to discover the cause, in vain; and were finally compelled to send for a practical man, who at once went to the junction between the main supply and the house pipe. On opening up the point of junction, a big toad was discovered, filling the orifice and making it impossible for the water to pass. The man told us that he had met with several similar instances. The toad had come in as a tiny tadpole and had grown until it blocked the pipe. Something like this may happen in our lives. Hidden sin may grow on us until it shuts the living water out of them. It was so with the woman at the well. In her heart there lurked an unconfessed sin. It blocked her reception of the living water, and choked the spring. In mercy this wondrous Stranger uncovered and exposed the evil thing, which she would fain have hidden. By speaking of Him as a prophet she acknowledged that He spake truly, and immediately, the obstacle being removed, the fountain began to spring, as her actions proved.

Shall we not stay here, and take no further step in the study of these great questions until we are sure that, so far as we know, there is nothing to check the

inflow or outflow of the water of life? There is a judgment-seat in every heart, where each stands naked and open before His eyes, which are as a flame of fire. You will find that He never deals with more than one thing at a time. By this you can always distinguish between the question of a morbid sensitiveness and the stirrings of the angel who wrestled with Jacob at the ford of the Jabbok. God's Spirit is always definite! Deal with Him, and He will show you where the evil lurks, and give you grace to cast it out.

6. *All things become new.* The woman ceased her arguments and became a disciple. She dropped her prejudices and forgot that Jesus was a Jew. Instead of avoiding people, she started off to the town to tell every one, and especially the men, that she had found a Man, who, though He knew all, loved better than He knew. So preoccupied was she that she forgot her waterpot, and left it standing on the worn parapet of the well. When we have found the living spring we do not need the bucket any more! Presently she returned, with the whole town behind her, and as they approached, Jesus saw that harvest-time had arrived. Little weening it, she had given the Master a better meal than His disciples had brought from the town. Finally, she had the pleasure of conducting Him to Sychar, where He stayed with them two days. How full those days were of holy and uplifting converse! She would sit at His feet and drink in every word. Her heart leaped with joy as she saw many of her townsfolk believe in Him—some because of the change they had witnessed in her, and others because they had heard Him for themselves, and, notwithstanding their prejudices against Jews, had come to believe that

He was indeed the Saviour of the world. What became of her afterwards we do not certainly know. Perhaps she became one of the ministering women during Christ's life, or she may have become an evangelist throughout Samaria. Tradition records that she became a martyr in the first outbreak of Roman persecution.

7. Note the inevitable results of the opening of our spirit to the Spirit of Christ. We put away, or are willing for Him to put away, everything that chokes or hinders His supremacy. We live for Him, and He at once responds to our yielded nature, as air rushes in to fill a vacuum. We become deeply conscious of the reality and presence of Jesus Christ, and He becomes our Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. We lose our taste for all that would grieve Him; and are constrained by His love no longer to live unto ourselves, but for Him, and for all others for His sake. It becomes as natural to love Him best, and to be the channels of His love, as for birds to sing or rivers to flow.

A friend of mine once illustrated this address by the following story: A girl in a Lancashire town one Sunday evening surrendered to Christ. As she left the penitent form she said to her minister: "Please pray for me. I am working in a room of our factory with twenty other girls, and not one of them is a Christian." The minister said: "Christ can help you to lead them all to Christ." That night she repeated to the Lord the minister's words, and asked Him to help her in what seemed an impossible task. Six weeks later, at the after-meeting, she brought a girl into the inquiry room, and said to the minister: "This

is the sixteenth, and the other four are frightened because they know that their turn will come next!" Such are they who are led by the Spirit!

Oh that we had that passion to save others! It was a compact between that holy Indian missionary, known as "the praying Hyde," who asked God, that each day He should give him at least three souls.

And Brainerd tells us that one Sunday night he offered himself to be used only by God and for Him. "It was raining, and the roads were muddy; but this desire grew so strong that I kneeled down by the side of the road, and told God all about it. While I was praying I told Him that my hands should work for Him, my feet walk for Him, my tongue speak for Him, if He would only use me for His instrument—when suddenly the darkness of the night lit up, and I knew that God heard and answered my prayer; and I felt that I was accepted into the inner circle of God's loved ones."

VIII

ATTUNED TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD

ZEPH. iii. 15 and 17.

LET us imagine ourselves upon a lovely afternoon climbing a hill, which is reflected, even to each blade of grass, in the still water of a lake that nestles at its foot. If we cast a pebble into the centre of the lake, concentric circles will be at once created, which will continue to enlarge, until they break in simultaneous music all round the shore.

I have been told that in South Africa news is transmitted among the natives with almost the speed of the telegraph. A man will climb a lofty eminence and announce his message in a clear, strong voice. Immediately the concentric wave of sound will radiate outward, to be caught up at various points, north, south, east, and west, of the ever-widening circle, and be passed on in fresh concentric vibrations of sound.

The same phenomenon is supplied in wireless telegraphy. When a message is sent forth from "the transmitter," the concentric waves of ether bear it forward to every point of the compass; and thus the message may be picked up at any point on the circumference, just as though it had been directed to that point alone. Take, for instance, a ship in distress. Her need, her precise position in the ocean, her call for help, are transmitted to the surrounding atmosphere of ether, and the concentric ether waves carry it out

in all directions to every ship in the ever-increasing circle which is equipped with a Marconi receiver attuned to the transmitter. Of course, where a ship is not so equipped, or where its receiver is out of order and not perfectly attuned to the transmitter, the news and its summons will not be picked up. However dire the need or urgent the call, each will be in vain, even though the ship is within easy reach; whereas any vessels that are in perfect accord will become at once aware of their needed assistance and will divert their course, through vast distances, to succor an endangered crew. Similarly ships without receivers, or receivers out of tune, would know nothing about important or joyful tidings, which were being radioed through the world. On one of my ocean voyages we had an instance of a wireless message, the diameter of whose circle was at least 20,000 miles!

Let us apply this thought! Concentric waves of power and love are always circling out from the divine Transmitter. When our natures are attuned to God, by the yielding of our wills to Him, we receive of His fulness, and grace upon grace. On the contrary, we are oblivious of the waves that are beating around us, if our will is not at one with His. God forces none, for love cannot compel. His service is perfect freedom. The thing which hinders us is that our wills are not in harmony with His. God never seeks His own will; we do. There is no other way to blessedness than to ask Him to take our will and harmonize it with His own, though the transfer involves the Cross.

There are at least five of these concentric circles which are throbbing around us continually; but, alas,

in too many cases, the waves of divine grace meet with no reciprocity. Our hearts are out of tune. What we need, and might have, reaches us, but there is no response from our hearts because we have never been attuned.

"God is in the midst of her; God will help her, and that right early"—concentric waves of help!

"Where two or three are gathered in my Name, there am I in the midst"—concentric waves of power for intercession.

"There they crucified him, and two others with him, but Jesus in the midst"—concentric waves of salvation.

"The Lamb in the midst of the throne"—concentric waves of victory.

"The Lord in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save. He will be silent in his love. He will rejoice over thee with singing"—concentric waves of divine love, too great to be expressed in human speech.

Such is the impact of God! There are the waves which are breaking over the universe, and of which every man, woman, and child, spirits of the just made perfect and angels of light, may partake on the sole condition of being attuned to His ever-blessed nature! "They that receive the abundance of grace shall reign" here and now.

An interesting illustration of the attunement of the human with the divine is given in a well-known passage in the third Gospel: "Then drew near the publicans and sinners to hear him" (Luke xv. 1). These instruments that had been badly jangled were being brought into symphony. "But the Pharisees and scribes murmured" (verse 2). That murmur in-

dicated their obstinate dissonance. Religious professors may live and die in outward contact with the Transmitter, yet be absolutely deaf to the music of His love!

The father in the parable carried in his heart the norm or rhythm of the blessed life. The music of it filled his heart and radiated forth. It was there before the younger son asked for his portion of goods; there when the wayward lad took his journey; there when his wayworn figure appeared on the sky-line. It found its befitting expression in the music which circled out from the banquet, and arrested the attention of the elder brother. It was throbbing around the two, when the father came out to urge him to enter. May we not say reverently that from the throne of God and of the Lamb these waves of love are constantly welling forth, and pouring over the world! This is their central chord: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." These words contain God's ideal for us all. To this He invites us!

(1) *There is Community of Nature.* The Greek word is emphatic. It is sonship, not by adoption but by birth, through which we become partakers of the divine nature. Each child of humanity is invited to become a child of God, and He will send forth the Spirit of His Son into the heart, crying "Abba, Father."

(2) *Community of Fellowship.* "Thou art ever with me." The father in the parable longed for the companionship of these two lads. It may be that their mother had passed away, leaving him desolate, and he thought that in their companionship his loneliness would be relieved. The earthly parent longs as much

for the abiding fellowship of his children as God does for ours. He goes far, when He says, "Son, give me thine heart," but no words can exaggerate the yearning of infinite love for the close fellowship of those for whom He spared not His own Son.

(3) *Community of Possession.* "All that I have is thine." We are called to be sons; and if sons, "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." It is incredible, but it is true! Just now we are in our minority, and are not entrusted with our full property. We are understewards and guardians until the time appointed by our Father; but it is certain that we are not bond-servants, but sons, and if sons, then heirs of God. All things are ours, whether life or death, things present or things to come, and, best of all, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

But, as in the parable, so with men and women still; the receiving apparatus may be out of gear or out of touch, and God's ideals are lost to us. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathers her chickens beneath her wing, but ye would not!"

The prodigal was out of tune with the father's heart because of sensual passion; the elder brother, because of his pride; and it will be impossible for us to enter into God's ideals, so long as we permit the intrusion of self in either of these directions.

If, therefore, we sincerely desire to be absolutely attuned to the nature of God, we must love. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." Only thus shall we know and appreciate the love that God has to us. There is no alternative; but as Tennyson puts it: Love must take

up the harp of life and strike on all its chords with might, until the chord of self shall be silenced and pass from sight.

The tenderest sounding of the chord of Deity was at Calvary. "Herein was manifested the love of God towards us, in that Christ died for us." It was not that He interposed between us and an angry God who needed to be appeased; for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. It was by the Eternal Spirit that Jesus offered Himself. The love of the entire Godhead, sacrificial, inexhaustible, infinite, is revealed at Calvary, and if we would be attuned to the nature of God, we must not only know and believe it, we must enter into its spirit, and repeat in the tiny miniature of our lives every note of its great chords.

The love of the father in the parable, though it failed with the elder son, succeeded with the younger. The love of the Cross, though it left the one thief unrepentant, welcomed the other to Paradise. Let us see to it that, in our case, it be not in vain. And at this moment let every one of us take a rapid survey of our lives, and assure ourselves that there is no hatred, animosity, or enmity between us and others, which may be putting us out of touch with the divine nature. There is a sense in which, though we cannot like each other equally, we may be free of all wrath, malice, hatred, and evil speaking.

During a recent Welsh revival this unforgettable incident took place. In a large mining centre the evening meeting was commencing in the crowded chapel an hour before the advertised time. Some were praying, some endeavoring to address the rest, and many were singing or reciting texts of Scripture. To

the superficial observer it might have seemed that all the conditions favorable to a revival were present. But in the midst of the excitement Evan Roberts entered, passed to the chair in the pulpit, and knelt for a time in silent prayer. Thus his sensitive nature soon became aware that the meeting was stirred more by excitement than by the breath of the Spirit of God. So he rose and silenced the hubbub, and for a whole half-hour the great congregation remained hushed and still in the searching light of the Holy Spirit. At the end of that period of self-examination, which anticipated the judgment-seat of Christ, one of the best-known mine-owners in the town rose from his seat and extended his hand to another mine-owner, and the two men, professing Christians, who had been at feud for years, were reconciled. Instantly the entire atmosphere of the meeting was changed. The keynote now was Calvary; the power was that of Pentecost. Scores were born again into the Kingdom of God, and all bare witness to the overshadowing presence of Christ. That meeting was keyed to the love of God. Like one vast choir, the people sang a new song; and to those two men there must have flowed, in a tumultuous tide, the blessed consciousness of God's nearness and love.

If, therefore, to-day you have brought your gift to the altar—it may be a desire for a fresh consecration; for a closer walk with God; for more quickened awareness of the love and grace of God—and if the Holy Spirit reminds you of some man or woman who has aught against you, the offering must be postponed till after you are reconciled. Then you may return to offer it. The fire will not have died down; the Great

High Priest will not have grown weary in waiting. If you do not love your brother whom you have seen, you cannot be in touch with God whom you have not seen. There is no alternative!

Here we must distinguish between love and the emotion of love; between love and like. We cannot like every one, but we can love every one, because love in its initial stages is the product of the will and choice of doing and acting, not of feeling. When (Mark xii. 28) the scribe asked our Lord to define the chief commandment, Jesus replied: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself." Many of us, mistakenly, try to love our enemy with our heart, and find our task impossible. Whereas if we begin with the strength, *i. e.* the will and the outward act—not because it is easy, but because it is right—we shall discover that the strength will lead to the kindly thought of the mind, and that to the soul with its moral intuitions, and that in turn to the heart. Make the advance; write the letter; confess the wrong; offer your apology; restore what has been dishonestly taken; repay the debt; rather endure loss than keep the wound open; and you will find yourself in immediate harmony with God's nature. In the words of Christ, "You will be children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to shine on the evil, and sends rain on the unjust."

When we choose that position, and in the power of the Spirit take the first steps along this path, heaven is opened above us. The concentric circles of Divine Love are recognized, welcomed, and received. We march to the music of reality. When we need com-

fort, or power to intercede, or the saving help of God's right hand, or the victory that overcomes the world, or the consciousness of a love that will never let us go, we shall be able to receive them, as the transmitter releases its message to the receiver. Like Noah, we shall hear the tapping of the dove at the window of the heart, and shall find in its mouth the first green leaf of those new heavens and that new earth which will abide for ever.

There is a scientific phrase in common use, which is coincident with the spirit of this chapter. The late Professor Henry Drummond gave it a wide vogue in his famous book on *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. It is the law of correspondence with our environment. Directly an organism falls out of that correspondence it dies. When it has only a partial correspondence it is enfeebled and anæmic. Only when the correspondence is perfect is vigorous health possible; but when that is established doors are opened on every side into the treasure-stores of the universe.

The environment, which is our native habitat, is the love of God. God is; God is everywhere; God is everywhere and unchanging, and God is love. In Him we are meant to live and move and have our being. If we are proud, selfish, and unforgiving, we are out of correspondence with our divine environment, and become anæmic and unhealthy. We are as unable to enjoy life or to explore its possibilities as a sick child to gather the treasures of the spring woods and meadows. Love, which forgives and forgets, which knows no jealousy, harbors no ill-will, cherishes no grudge, and meets the sharp edge of unkindness with gentle forbearance, should be our response to God's

environing presence. Then the mountains will bring peace, and the little hills His righteousness; then mines of diamonds will open under our feet, and the river-sands shall yield gold.

It was the habit of the late C. H. Spurgeon, when about to speak in a vast auditorium, to listen attentively till, either through the orchestra or some previous speaker, he could detect the chord of the place; because every building has its special chord, and to speak in harmony with it is to be able to fill it without strain either to speaker or audience. Now the one chord which is sounding through the universe is the love of God. Its cadence is the music of the spheres. It is the keynote to which every harp touched by angel-hands is attuned. Its notes are wafted down amid the jangling discords of this sin-stricken earth, and are heard by the few who have learned to listen. When we cherish unkind and jealous thoughts, we are unable to symphonize with it or to hear it. We are at discord with holy beings everywhere. We are out of step with the onward march of the saints. We shut ourselves off from the Divine Transmitter; and there settles down upon us only the sultry glare and unutterable loneliness of the desert. Therefore, little children, let us love, for love is of God, and they who abide in love abide in God; for God is love.

IX

THE PROBLEM OF OUR PERSONAL SINNERSHIP

"If we say that we have no sin . . . If we confess our sins . . ."—1 John i. 8, 9.

THERE is clearly a profound distinction between what we think and what we say about sin, and the truth concerning it. In the opening passage of his first epistle, John inserts three hypothetical "Ifs," and follows each with his corrective "If." It is well worth our while to consider them, always remembering that the first two verses of the second chapter should be linked up with the first.

Sin

In the second of these couplets quoted above there is a clear distinction between *sin* and *sins*. Sin is the root-principle, the assertion of "I," the result of heredity, the condition into which we are born as children of humanity. The theologians describe it as "original sin." Those who bowl know that in each ball there is a bias, which, when it leaves the hand, will sooner or later deflect it from the straight. That bias affords a precise analogy to the drift of our nature towards the self-life. As the centre letter of *sin* is "I," so the predominating tendency of us all is to circle around our own interests, tastes, whims, posses-

sions, and even the respect which we consider to be our due. The needle is diverted from the pole by the mass of metal on the ship.

When we are regenerated by the Spirit of God, we are lifted into a new sphere, the sphere of the "Not-I." This is love, in its divine significance of altruism, *i. e.* otherism. From that moment there will be conflict between the two, as of old between the house of David and the house of Saul, in which the latter becomes always weaker, the former always stronger.

In one of the greatest pieces of self-anatomy and self-revelation on record (Rom. vii. 7–25), Paul shows how for long he battled against the self-life by the energy of the nobler and better convictions of the soul. It must not be forgotten that the soul is endowed with moral instincts, with conscience, with a knowledge of right and wrong. Even Horace, whose soul was vitiated by the poisonous air of Roman society, confesses that while he approves the better, he does the worse. But the soul, with its noblest ideals and resolves, is unable to accomplish its purpose. Still the pitiful confession is extorted: "The good I would, I do not, and the evil I would not, that I do." There are many Christian people who are making the same mistake. They are endeavoring to conquer the evil bias of their dispositions by the energy of their own resolution, apart from the spiritual forces which are within their reach. They are either unaware of their provision, or for some reason are unaccustomed to their use. Satan cannot cast out Satan; the soul cannot exercise its own tyrants; water cannot rise above its own level; the fulcrum of the lever must be outside the lever itself.

In three wonderful consecutive chapters in his epistle to the Romans, the apostle explains the great answer which the religion of Christ gives to those yearnings after deliverance, victory, and freedom.

"Cut him dead." In the sixth chapter the keynote is "Reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin." The apostle does not say that the sin-principle is dead, but that we are to reckon ourselves dead to it. The distinction is a very real and valuable one. Suppose that a woman finds that her husband is unfaithful to her and she obtains a divorce; if she meets him afterwards in the street or elsewhere, she cuts him dead. If he makes an offer of resuming their old association, she doesn't deign even to answer. Even though her life is stripped of its former comforts and luxuries, she will refuse to receive anything from his hands. When the maid-servant recognized Peter, as having been one of the associates of Christ, he vehemently repudiated the suggestion. He denied it and sware, saying, "I do not know the Man." It is with a similar vehemence that we should repudiate and put off the old man with his deeds.

There is a practice, I have been told, in fashionable circles, to tell the maid that the lady of the house is not at home to certain people on certain days. When the self-life calls on us, and wishes to enter the house of our life, the apostle suggests that we should say, "I am not at home to you." He also suggests that we should be constantly willing to render our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. In other words, he urges us to live on the positive side of our nature, so that the Lord may work in and through us of His own good pleasure.

The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

In the seventh chapter (verses 1–6) the apostle takes a further forward step. We used, above, the illustration of a woman who had divorced her husband, and refused to own him, or to recognize him in the street. But, we will suppose, that after their divorce she had become the wife of a perfectly beautiful man, in every way suited to win and hold her affections and respect. If now she meets her former husband she will present, not the mere negative of former days: "I will have nothing more to do with you"; but the joyous positive: "I am perfectly happy. I have met one who understands me, who satisfies and engrosses my every thought. He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." This, says the apostle, is the true attitude of the Christian. "We are married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." We have died to what once held us, so that we can serve in a new way, not under the written code of "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not," but in the Spirit.

This is what Dr. Chalmers called the expulsive power of a new affection. Once, when he was riding on the box-seat of a coach travelling through the Highlands of Scotland, the route took them along a narrow ledge of the mountain side—on the one side the steep mountain slope, and on the other a deep precipice. On this ledge one of the four horses took fright, and there was acute danger lest the coach and all its occupants should be flung to instant death. Immediately the driver began to whip the shying horse with all his might, causing such pain that it forgot

its fright and began to pull at its traces. Dr. Chalmers asked the driver why he had flogged the animal so unmercifully, and got his answer: "I had to make him forget his fear by giving him something else to think about." Instantly this phrase formulated itself in the doctor's mind, and he said to himself, "The expulsive power of a new affection." This is the exact equivalent of the apostle's thought. May we not ask the Holy Spirit to shed abroad in our hearts the love of Jesus, that we may be sensitive against the least thing that would be foreign to His holy nature, or bring the tiniest film of distance between us? Directly we love, we become instinctively aware of the smallest incident which would bring pain or distaste to our beloved. When the wife of Tigranes came out of the royal tent, she was asked what she thought of its furniture, and especially of the King himself; and she replied that she had no eyes, save for the man (her husband), who had said that he would gladly give himself to death, if she might be spared. Yes! child of God, you have Christ's honor entrusted to your keeping! Do not give Him needless pain!

The Indwelling of the Spirit

In the eighth chapter we enter a new world. It is like the journey of the Mount Cenis Tunnel. On this side of the Alps, storms, avalanches, snow-clad mountains; on the other side the fair sun-bathed plains of Italy. In Romans six, negation; seven, union; eight, possession! The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells within our surrendered natures. We receive into our hearts the Spirit of sonship. This Spirit testifies along with our own spirit, and we en-

joy in anticipation the full joys of the acknowledged sonship of our Father's Home. The Spirit pleads within us. We know His mind, and feel the pulse of His energy. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which we have received from God. He is within it, holding it until it is changed into the likeness of the body of the glorified Christ, by the same power which enables Him to make all things subservient to Himself.

In the meanwhile, if the self-life threatens to break out, He checks and masters it. The flesh may lust against the spiritual life, but it encounters not our own frail and feeble resolutions, which it might easily break down, but the mighty power of the Holy Spirit; so that we may not do what otherwise we might. That is the negative pole of the Holy Spirit's operation; but on the positive pole He is exalting the beauty and love of Jesus; so that we cannot see for the glory of that light. This is the teaching of the chosen teacher of us Gentiles in Galatians v. 16–26.

Learn from the gull's flight! How often one has stood on the deck of an ocean-going steamer to watch the wonder and beauty of flight. The bird, of course, does not float in the air, and is only kept there by the careful balance maintained between the down-pull of gravitation and the counteraction of the spirit of life. The one is like the pull of the cord, or string, held by the boy; the other is like the expanded face of the kite exposed to the breeze. The kite flies because that balance is maintained, and the bird flies because the attraction of the earth is met by the elasticity and rebound of the air, as it is struck downwards by the wings. The law of the spirit of life in the bird's

throbbing heart makes it free from the law of earth-attraction. Let the sportsman kill that life, the dead weight falls.

Let us regard that natural parable as illustrating Christian experience. There is certainly the down-pull of former habits, of unchecked desires, and of the tempter's suggestions; but the Holy Spirit communicates to us the very life which fills the heart of Jesus, and the regularity and quality of that life is more than enough to emancipate us from the law of sin, which is in our members.

Sins. The Greek word for sin is "to miss the mark." When the prodigal returned to his father his first word was, "Father, I have missed the mark." There are two kinds of sin into which we are prone to fall. The negative, because we have not done the things that we ought to have done; and the positive, because we have done the things that we ought not to have done. We are constantly coming short of God's glory; and when we are off our guard and walking carelessly, we may be suddenly tripped up and overtaken by a fault.

The General Confession and the Shorter Catechism are therefore thoroughly Scriptural when they classify sins as those of omission as well as those of commission.

Thus the true definition of sin is the want of conformity to the will of God, as well as the positive transgression of His law. It is very necessary to use this two-pronged fork! Imagine that a number of men are on their way to the enlisting-station. We will suppose the standard is six feet. They are all under that height, but the tallest of the group magnifies the

fact that he is a clear two inches above the best of them. It may be so, but he will be as certainly rejected as the shortest, because he comes short when measured, without fear or favor. You may be better than scores of men in the circle of your acquaintance, but you will need the salvation of Christ equally with the worst. There is no difference between you and them. You must both be justified freely by the grace of God through faith. The blood of Jesus Christ must cleanse you even from sins of which you are unconscious, as the tear-water is ever flowing over the miner's eye, cleansing the pupil and keeping it bright.

For dealing with positive sins which you have committed or into which you have been betrayed, the following positions should be taken:

1. Do not hide nor cloak your sins before the face of your Heavenly Father, but confess them to Him at once. Do not wait for the hour of evening prayer, nor even for the opportunity of being alone, but right there, in the busy street or wrangling mart, lift up your face to Christ and confess your sin with a penitent, meek, and obedient heart. Do not excuse yourself, do not palliate your fault, do not implicate your brother. Call a spade a spade!

2. It is not enough to confess to Christ. If you have sinned against another, leave there your gift before the altar, first go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift. It may be that you will have in some way to make a substantial reparation for wrong done. You must confess the wrong in so many words, and make good.

3. If you have lost your temper and spoken in hot

anger, it is not enough to be extraordinarily pleasant. You must be more definite and explicit than that. Even though you have to apologize to your servant and ask forgiveness from an employee, it must be done! If you desire complete forgiveness from God or man, there must be candid uncovering of the wound, or mortification may set in.

4. We must not confess sins generally, but particularly. Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, must be taken. To say generally, "I pray Thee to forgive my sins," is too indefinite a statement to meet the case; though, on the other hand, we must avoid becoming morbid and introspective. Do not pride yourself on the amplification of your confession, but ask the Holy Spirit if He is satisfied. If, after a pause, He says nothing, pass on to thank God that the filthy garments have been taken from you, that you have become attired in a change of raiment. Then ask that a fair mitre may be placed on your head.

5. Dare to claim to be put back into the same place which you occupied before you fell. When I was a little boy in a Dame's school, and I spoke to the lad next me, I was sent to the bottom of the class, and had to work my way back again, through days and weeks. God does not treat us so! When sin is confessed, it is put behind His back into the depths of the ocean of oblivion. Though it is sought for it cannot be found. "If the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, none of his transgressions that he hath committed shall be remembered against him." When God forgives, He forgets. As David puts it,

and he had reason to know, "He restoreth my soul," *i. e.* he puts me back in the old place at His table, and in His love there is no shadow cast by turning.

6. Remember that Christ is willing to wash your feet, as in John xiii.; but He has much else to do, and we should see to it that we do not give Him needless trouble or difficulty on our account. We should rather help Him by washing one another's feet.

7. Let the memory of your own failures make you very tender and gentle with others. If a man be overtaken in a fault, do not blaze it abroad, do not mention it to another except to elicit his prayer and coöperation to set the offender right, in a spirit of meekness. "When thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren." This notice was printed in large letters in the advertisement column of a daily newspaper: "Whoever stole a lot of hides on the fifth day of the present month is hereby informed that their owner has a sincere wish to be his friend. If poverty tempted him to this false step, the owner will gladly put him in the way of obtaining money by means more likely to bring him peace of mind." That notice saved a man who was being swept down by the torrent!

8. Always remember that the pardon of sin has been won by the death of Christ. Do not plead for it agonizingly, but claim it humbly. God is faithful and just to forgive, *i. e.* He is faithful to His promises and just to His Son. "He delighteth in mercy!" He will abundantly pardon!

You may say that this makes sin too easy; and that if forgiveness can be obtained so easily men will sin and sin again. But remember, when the two women

stood before Solomon, that she who was the real mother of the babe would forfeit the child to the other rather than see it suffer!

It may be asked, Where does penitence come in? Is there not need for that godly sorrow which weeps at His feet? Yes, certainly, but it is not required as the price of forgiveness. Forgiveness has been purchased by the sacrifice of Christ. We need add nothing to that; but when we are forgiven, the sorrow of genuine penitence will break out and flow freely.

We must distinguish between penitence and repentance. Repentance is an act of the will, which arises from the conviction that certain ways of life are wrong, mistaken, hurtful, and grieving to God. We determine to turn over a new leaf, to look to Him whose Spirit has pleaded with us. It is the right-about-face of the military officer. It is an act of the will, energized and quickened by the Spirit of God. It may be accounted as the other side of faith. They are two aspects of the same act; the two sides of a coin. Often it is absolutely unemotional, but it is always resolute.

When we are forgiven; when we realize how much our sin has cost Christ; when we review our mistakes and sins against God and man, we become deeply moved. We know that we are forgiven, but we cannot forgive ourselves. That is penitence! It will always follow us, as a veiled figure, to the gate of the eternal city! Speaking for myself, I think that I shall sometimes have to slip away to some humble door amidst the many mansions, some sheltering shade, that I may weep quietly. Is not that the reason why we are told that God will wipe away all tears? Alas,

some of us will need a good deal of such divine ministry, though we know ourselves forgiven!

We dare not make light of sin or of sins. The blessed ease with which we receive forgiveness must never blind us to the price by which that forgiveness was purchased. The anguish of the sense of separation which came to our Saviour when He bore our sins was so great that He feared He would die in Gethsemane before He could reach the Cross. With strong cries He entreated for help that He might be able to fulfil the purpose of eternity, and was heard in the thing He feared. Sin must be very terrible to have cost Him so dear!

Many of the greatest saints, like Augustine, Bunyan, and George Fox, have been permitted to look down into the crater while God has held their hand. The latter tells us in his diary: "I fasted much, walked abroad in solitary places many days, and often took my Bible and sat in hollow trees and lonesome places till night came on, and frequently in the night walked about by myself. . . . Oh, the overlasting love of God to my soul! When my torments were great, then was His love exceeding great. When all my hopes were gone, and I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ, that can speak to thy condition.' When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. . . . I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death. Also an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that, also, I saw the infinite love of God and I had great openings."

X

THE FIERY ORDEAL OF TEMPTATION

"Christ was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin."—Heb. iv. 15 (see also ii. 9, 10).

WHAT is God doing at this moment? He may be creating new worlds; may be working up into new and beautiful shapes what we should account as waste products; or may be preparing to unveil the new heavens and the new earth. But there is one thing of which we may be sure: He is bringing many sons unto glory! In order to help these to the uttermost, the Son of God was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. It was real temptation, for He suffered being tempted; but being perfected through the terrible ordeal, He has become the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Let us learn His talisman of victory!

This bringing of many sons unto glory is a long and difficult process, for three reasons:

(1) It is necessary that we should be created as free agents, able to say "No" as well as "Yes."

(2) We have to choose between the material world, which is so present and very attractive to our senses, and the eternal, spiritual, and unseen. But the choice is inevitable if we are to really know things. We can only know a thing by contrast with its opposite.

(3) There is a realm of evil spirits constantly re-

garding us with envious hatred, and bent on seducing us from the paths of goodness and obedience. They are adepts at their art.

If it be asked why we are placed in circumstances so perilous, so trying, the answer, so far as we can formulate it, is that we are being tested with a view to the great ministries awaiting us in the next life. We are to be priests and kings! There are vast spaces in the universe that may have to be evangelized or ruled or influenced for righteousness. It may be that important spheres of ministry are needing those to fill them who have learned the secret of victory over materialism on the one hand, and over the power of Satan on the other. We know that there was war in heaven before Satan and his angels were cast down to earth, and there may be another, and yet another. Therefore earth may be the school, the training-ground, the testing-place for the servants and soldiers of the hereafter. This thought need not be in conflict with the ideals of rest and worship which we are wont to associate with the future life. Eternity will give opportunities for all! But, if it became Him of whom and through whom are all things to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through the suffering of temptation, it stands to reason that His comrades and soldiers must pass through the same, that they may become more than conquerors, and, having overcome, may sit with Him on His throne, as He overcame and is set down with His Father on His throne.

The first temptation on record is that of our first parents in Eden. It is a masterpiece of psychology! The experience of all after-time has added nothing to this marvellous analysis.

1. Temptation is more formidable when we are alone! Solitude is full of peril, unless it is full of Christ!

2. Some outward object, or some fancy of the mind, attracts our attention. It may be an apple, a face, a gratification, the lure of popularity, or money. The longer we look at it the stronger the fascination grows. Some birds are mesmerized by the fixed gaze of their foe at the foot of the tree. The longer we gaze at something forbidden, the stronger its mesmeric power. While we continue to look, the tempter covers the walls of imagery with more definite and attractive colors, and his ideals imperiously demand realization in act. Our only hope is to tear ourselves away from those basilisk eyes; to hasten from the haunted chamber; to escape, as Joseph did in the house of Potiphar.

3. If we linger, many thoughts will gather to ply us—all of them suggested by the tempter, who speaks through the voice of our own soul. These suggestions will question the love and wisdom which have forbidden. "Perhaps we have placed an exaggerated interpretation on our limitations and prohibitions. Are they not rather arbitrary? Would it not be good to know evil just once, that it might be avoided ever after? Besides, is it not necessary to know evil in order to realize good? Perhaps it would be better to satisfy the inner craving for satisfaction by one single act; then the hungry pack of wolves would at least be silenced! After all, is it not probable that if one were to know the forbidden thing it would be so much easier to warn others?" Such are the reasonings in which the tempted shelter themselves, not realizing

that the only certain way of knowing evil is not by committing, but by resisting it.

4. Finally, we take the forbidden step, eat the forbidden fruit; the garment of light which veiled our nakedness drops off; the tempter runs laughing down the forest glade; a shadow falls on the sunshine, and a cold blast whistles in the air. Our conscience curses us, and we die, *i. e.* we cease to correspond to our proper environments, which are God, purity, and obedience. Eve ought to have dropped that apple like a burning coal, and hurried from the spot; but, no; she lingered, ate, and gave to her husband; so sin entered into the world; and sin opened the door to pain, travail, sorrow, the loss of purity, the loss of God's holy fellowship in the cool of the day, the fading of the garden, and the reign of death and the grave.

The Temptation of our Lord. 1. It came after the descent of the Spirit as a dove. We may always expect deep experience of the tempter to follow close on the highest moments of spiritual exaltation. Where you have mountains you must look for valleys!

2. He was led of the Spirit to be tempted; clearly, then, temptation is not sin. A holy nature might go through hell itself, assailed by clouds of demons, and come out on the farther side untainted. So long as the waves of evil break on the outward bulwarks of the spirit they are innocuous. Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.

3. The sword of the Spirit and the shield, against which the darts of evil fall blunted to the ground, are the words of the ever-blessed God, and the upward glances of a steadfast faith. Remember how Jesus

said, "it is written"; "it is written again." He is also the Pioneer and Perfection of faith!

4. Each temptation which He overcame seemed to give Him power in the very sphere in which it had sought His overthrow.

He was tempted to use His power to satisfy His own hunger; but, having refused to use it selfishly, He was able to feed five thousand; and four thousand men, besides women and children.

He was tempted to cast Himself from the wing of the temple to the dizzy depth below, in order to attract attention to Himself; but having refused, He was able to descend into Hades, and then ascend to the Father's throne; to lay down His life and take it again for a world of sinners.

He was tempted to adopt Satan's method of gaining adherents by pandering to their passions; but He refused, and adopted the opposite policy of falling into the ground to die, of treading the winepress alone, of insisting that it is not by yielding to passion, but by self-denial, self-sacrifice, and the Cross that salvation is alone to be obtained. Therefore, a great multitude, which no man can number, have washed their robes and made them white in His blood, and stand before the throne.

Having, therefore, met temptation in the arena, and mastered it in its threefold spheres—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—Jesus is able to succor them that are being tempted; and if they should fail He is able to understand, because He has gone every step of the way Himself, and is well acquainted with its perils. He can easily trace the lost sheep on the mountains, because He has

marked every pitfall and the lair of every enemy. He has looked over the cliff-brink to the bottom, where those who have missed the track "in the cloudy and dark day" may be lying; and when He has found them He brings them home on His shoulder rejoicing.

Our Own Temptations. We all have to pass through the wilderness of temptation, the stones of which blister our feet, and the air is like a sirocco breath in our faces.

1. All God's sons are tempted. As we have seen, we only know light by darkness, sweet by bitter, health by disease, good by evil resisted and overcome.

"'Oh, where is the sea?' the fishes said,
As they swam through the crystal waters blue!"

They had never been out of it, and so were in ignorance of that which had always been their element.

2. The pressure of temptation is strictly limited. When Satan approached God with regard to Job, he was on two occasions restricted to a fixed barrier, beyond which he might not go. In the case of Peter also, when he obtained permission to approach him, he could only go so far as to sift him as wheat; he might rid him of chaff, but not hurt anything essential. Remember also that glorious announcement "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

3. As you live near God the temptation gets deeper down in your nature. You are aware of it in subtler

forms and disguises. It attacks motives rather than the outward habits and actions.

One summer afternoon, when I came down to the Auditorium at Northfield, Massachusetts, I found Mr. Moody and his brother on the platform, and between them a young apple tree, just digged up and brought from the neighboring orchard. There were about a thousand people in the audience. When I reached the platform the following dialogue took place:

Mr. Moody to his brother: "What have you here?"

"An apple tree," was the reply.

"Was it always an apple tree?"

"Oh no, it was a forest sapling, but we have inserted an apple graft."

Mr. Moody to me: "What does that make you think of?"

"You and I were forest saplings," said I, "with no hope of bearing fruit, but the Jesus-nature has been grafted into us by the Holy Spirit."

To his brother: "Does the forest sapling give you trouble?"

"Why, yes," said the gardener. "It is always sending out shoots under the graft, which drain off the sap."

"What do you do with them?"

"We pinch them off with our finger and thumb; but they are always coming out lower down the tree."

Then he turned to me and asked if there was anything like it in the spiritual life, to which I replied: "It is a parable of our experience. The old self-life is always sending out its shoots, and we can have no mercy on them; but if we deal with the more super-

ficial sins on the surface of our life, as we get older we realize their deeper appeals, and to the end of life shall be more and more aware of their sinister power. The quick sensitiveness of age must not be ignored or overlooked. It may be as strong a shoot in the old forest sapling as the manifestations of passion in earlier life. Old men, for instance, may be jealous of young ones, and quick to take offence if there are symptoms of their being put aside."

4. Temptation is not in itself sin, but we cannot say, as our Saviour could, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." We cannot appropriate those last words. We know that all the inner gunpowder magazines are not emptied. Therefore it is just as well, after a severe time of testing, as the demons leave us, to ask ourselves if there has been some subtle response in the depths of our nature it may be forgiven. We must not risk the loss of ship or cargo because the combustion is so slow and so deep in the hold.

5. In the hour of temptation affirm your union with your all-victorious and exalted Saviour! Stand in His victory! You are part of His mystical Body; take your rightful position! God has set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies; be sure to come down on your foe from the heights of the throne. It is always easier to fight down from the mountain slope than up from the lowland valleys. You can be more than a conqueror through Him that loved you; but abide in Him.

6. Always ask the Saviour to hold the door on the inside. Satan will burst it open against *your* feeble strength; but when Jesus stands within all hell will

be foiled. Though ten thousand demons are at you, in your patience possess your soul!

7. One other point is of immense importance. Be sure to claim the opposite grace from Christ. The fact that an attack is being made at a certain position in your fortifications proves that you are weakest there. When therefore the tempter advances to the attack, and you are aware of his strategy, take occasion to claim an accession of Christ's counterbalancing strength. When tempted to quick temper, "Thy patience, Lord!" To harsh judgment, "Thy gentleness, Lord!" To impurity, "Thy purity, Lord!"

"By all hell's hosts withstood,
We all hell's hosts o'erthrow;
And conquering still by Jesus' blood,
We on to victory go."

Sometimes temptation will come upon us in the hatred and opposition of man, and we shall be strongly tempted to use force against force, strength against strength, and to employ weapons of flesh and blood. This is not the best. The raging foe is best encountered by the quiet faith and courage which enable a man to go boldly forward, not yielding, not daunted, not striking back. Hand the conflict over to the Captain of your salvation. It is for you simply to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Love the truth more than all, and go on in the mighty power of God, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; in nothing daunted by your adversaries, but witnessing a good confession, whether man will bear or forbear. "Greater is he who is in you than he that is in the world."

It may be that this earth on which we find ourselves is the Marathon or the Waterloo of the universe. We are as villagers who were born on the site and are implicated in the issues of the war. We are not merely spectators but soldiers, and whether in single combat or in the advance of the whole line, it is for us to play a noble part. Full often in the history of war the achievements of a single soldier have changed the menace of defeat into the shout of victory. Think of David's conflict with Goliath; of the three that held the bridge in the brave days of old; and of the Guards at Waterloo! From their high seats the overcomers, who in their mortal life fought in the great conflict for the victory of righteousness and truth, are watching us. Are they disappointed at our handling of the matter? Are we worthy to call ourselves of their lineage, or to be named in the same category? Fight worthily of them, whether in private secret combat, or in the line of advance, that you may not be ashamed at the grand review!

Fight first against the wicked spirits that antagonize your own inner life. Repeat the exploits of David's mighties: of Benaiah, who slew a lion in a pit in time of snow; of the three who broke through the Philistines' lines and drew water from Bethlehem's well for their king; of Amasai and his host, the least of whom was equal to a hundred. Every lonely victory gained in your closet and in your most secret sacred hour is hastening the victory of the entire Church. Listen! Are not those the notes of the advancing conquering host? Are not the armies of heaven already thronging around the Victor on His white horse?

It is high time to awake out of sleep! The perfecting of God's purpose is at hand! The return of the Jews to Palestine; the budding of the fig tree; the bankruptcy of politicians and statesmen; the threatened overthrow of European civilization; the rise of Bolshevism; the new grouping of the nations for war, notwithstanding the appeals of the League of Nations; the awful havoc of Spiritism; the waning of love; all these are signs that we stand at the junction of two ages. The one is dying in the sky, tinting it with the sunset; the other is breaking in the East, and the cirrus cloudlets are beginning to burn. Let us then put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, that when He shall come in His glorious majesty to receive the kingdom of the world, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, blessed for evermore!

"Fight the good fight with all thy might,
Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right;
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally."

XI

DISLOCATED LIMBS

"The God of peace . . . make you perfect."
—Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

WHEN we recite that matchless prayer which teaches to pray, we ask that God's will shall be done on earth, as it is in heaven. It is surely a sublime conception, but its actual realization seems a long, long way off. What a vast revolution must take place before this myriad-peopled earth marches in step with "the solemn troops and sweet societies" of the unseen and eternal world. But be that as it may, it is for us to see to it that *we* are doing God's will, day by day, in that sphere of life in which we are placed. It would be little short of a mockery if we were to ask for God's will to be done in the world, while our own lives were regulated by pride and self-will. Let it be remembered that what we will such we are! The will is the final expression of our personality. We are not what we feel or think or wish for: we are what we choose, determine, will. As Bunyan puts it, when Prince Emmanuel enters the city of Mansoul, it is Lord Will-be-Will who must crown Him as King.

The Divine Ideal of Human Life

In the original creation the human will was meant to register the will of God, and to pass the divine impulses

and commandments into the region of the soul. Sometimes on board ship (before the 'phone made it possible for the captain to speak to every part of the great ocean-going liner) I have heard him quietly utter his orders to a seaman or subordinate officer standing beside him, who has in turn loudly repeated them through the speaking tube. That intermediary may represent the will, which was intended to receive directions from the Will of God, and pass them throughout the economy of our being. Such was the attitude of our Lord, in His perfect humanity. He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me"; "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me"; "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"; "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him"; "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Generations had passed since man in Eden definitely refused to do the will of God. Never on this earth had it been fulfilled perfectly. Sacrifice and offering had been presented; hecatombs of victims; myriads of gold and silver; severe penance and mortification. But when Jesus came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but thou hast prepared for me a human body, that in and through it I may do thy will, O my God." He took away the first, that He might establish the second. Thus, by the complete unison of His will with the will of the Father, we have been sanctified. This, then, is what was intended to be the normal experience of

humanity, that we also should live to do God's will, as Jesus did it, and as God unfolds it before us day by day and step by step.

The Obstacle to the Fulfilment of This Ideal

The whole nature of man has become disorganized. In the fall, the dominance of God's will was definitely repudiated, and the human will, instead of functioning in harmony with the will of God, began to obey the will of the flesh, in its grosser and more refined forms. Not what God wills, but what "I" will, has become the working principle of the immense majority. It has thus befallen that the will, by constant misuse, has become warped, dislocated, or to use the exact meaning of the Greek word, "out of joint." The writer of that noble prayer which stands at the beginning of this chapter, when rendered exactly, says: "May the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, *put you in joint,* in every good work, to do His will." It is a striking figure. The will in each one of us is present, but dislocated. It functions to self-will instead of to God's will. Therefore some strong and drastic measure is needed to readjust it, to force it back into its socket, to insist on its articulation with the will of God, so as to respond to the slightest impulse of the divine will.

Often, in an ice accident, a skater may lose his balance or be tripped up, and his shoulder-blade becomes dislocated. It is still in the body, but it is out of joint, so that his arm hangs useless by his side until the surgeon, by one strong blow, forces the bone into its place again. Is not that true of us all? We are in the body of Christ by redeeming grace, but we need

to be *set, i. e.* to be brought, it may be by a sudden shock, into articulated union with the will of God in Jesus Christ. Then it will be possible for the will of God once more to control and energize us for His consummate purposes. We shall work out our own salvation "with fear and trembling" lest we should lose a single pulse of the Holy Spirit's energy, when He worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Is there one of us who would shrink from the humble prayer for the great Surgeon of souls—"chirurgeon," the hand-worker—by the pressure of His tender and strong hands, here and now to joint our wayward will with the will of God, and then work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight? It was said of Enoch before he was translated that he pleased God. It seems impossible for us to emulate the holy patriarch, yet this verse distinctly promises that when our will is jointed with God's, He will work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight.

The Initial Step

It is for God to put us in joint. All that He requires of us is that we should be willing for Him to do it; or if we are not actually willing, then, that we should be *willing to be made willing.* For myself, this was my first step into the Blessed Life! When the claim of God for my will was presented, there was one key which I felt that I could not surrender, one province that I could not make over. Then there ensued a struggle, like Jacob's with the angel at the Jabbok ford. It was only when it seemed as though I should lose the opportunity that I said, *"I am not willing; but am willing to be made willing to have Thy*

whole will wrought out in my life." Then I knew that He had conquered, and was prepared to make the best of a very unworthy nature.

It may be objected that this way of stating the case may rob the human will of its individuality. Certainly we do not wish that our religion should emasculate us, and reduce us to the condition of the grass in the meadow or the rushes by the stream, when swept by the breeze. But, as a matter of fact, this teaching does not come within the scope of that objection, because the yielded will obeys, not automatically, but voluntarily. There is always required the answer of our will to God's Will, the "Yea" of the free agent who can withdraw from his allegiance if he choose.

It may also be objected that many who say that they have surrendered their will to God are as arbitrary and obstinate to have their will and way as before. That may be so! Such people often live in an experience of the long past, instead of the daily renewal of that experience. It is clearly necessary for us, as for our Saviour, especially in our Gethsemanes, to renew our vows and to ask for the grace of fresh adjustment. Also, as a matter of fact, when the will is really yielded to God, there is such a deep consciousness of the frailty and weakness of the human side of this great partnership as to induce profound humility and brokenness of spirit.

It may be objected, also, that our mortal nature can no more keep step with God than a little child can fall into the father's stride; but God knoweth our frame and remembers that we are but dust. He suits His pace to ours, and ours is always accelerating. We

follow after to apprehend that for which we were apprehended of Christ Jesus.

This, then, is the position that we have reached; our wills are ours to make them His; by nature they have become disjointed, but by His grace we have seen the folly of a dislocated life, and have asked that He would put us in joint to do His will, and that He would work in and through us that which is well-pleasing in His sight. Our one aim now is to work out what He is working in. At the parallel passage (Phil. ii. 13) the apostle refers this dual work to our "salvation." This, of course, does not refer to salvation from future penalty, but to that deepening work in our hearts which delivers us in ever-increasing measure from whatever is un-Christlike and evil. The dawn passes slowly over the sky; the touch of spring in the northern lands steals by almost insensible degrees in its earlier stages over the gardens and the fields. Similarly (Acts ii. 47, R.V.) we learn that the Lord added to the Early Church day by day *those that were being saved;* and the apostle tells us that *unto us who are being saved* (1 Cor. i. 18) the Gospel is the power of God. We have been saved from the penalty of sin. Some day, when Jesus appears without sin unto salvation, our body will be saved from the bondage of corruption. In the meanwhile, in this parenthesis of our experience, we are being saved lower down from the love and power of the selfish and evil disposition which has too long ruled us. We work out in obedient expression what God works in by suggestion and prompting. We do it with fear and trembling, as when the young Raphael entered Titian's studio and dreaded to miss one hint or suggestion that

fell from the master's lips; each monition being eagerly heard, carefully treasured, and reverently appropriated.

1. *But why should Almighty God have so great care for us?* That is one of the profoundest questions that mortal lips can utter: nor can we grasp the entire mystery; but this is clear, namely, that the message of salvation which is in Christ Jesus can only be promulgated by human lives and lips. God might have been pleased that the gates of heaven should open, morning by morning, to allow of the exodus of glorious angelic beings, who should carry the news of Christ to every creature. But He did not so determine. Instead of this, it is His pleasure to group around Christ a vast multitude of souls, attracted to Him by a mysterious affinity, like that which constrains the steel filings mixed in a promiscuous heap to leap up to the magnet which is moved above them. Our Lord always described them as those whom the Father had given Him (see John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 24). In another passage they are described as those who have come to Him (see John vi. 37). If you have come to Him, or desire to come, any such movement towards Him proves that you are among the given ones, given for the express purpose of maintaining and spreading His Kingdom. You were not called and saved for your own enjoyment, but that through you the world may be saved. You are saved that you may save others; and if you are not doing this, you are liable to grave censure, and even worse (see John xv. 2).

These given ones were tenderly referred to by our Lord as *His Flock*. He said that they were charac-

terized by three distinguishing marks. They know His voice. Also the Shepherd is constantly encouraging His sheep by speaking to them, and calling each by its name. They are known by Him, and they follow: "I am the Good Shepherd, I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, as the Father knows me, and I know the Father."

2. *The Blood of the Covenant to which God is a Party.* There is a yet further step. In the eternal world, before time began, when the whole plan of human history was considered and forecasted, these "given ones" seem to have been the subject of a special arrangement, in virtue of which the Father promised that they should be eternally associated with Jesus Christ as members of His Body, the component items of His Church, and His beautiful flock, bound to Him by the strongest and tenderest bonds. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." "As thou sendest me unto the world, even so send I them into the world." "Father, I will that where I am they also may be with me." This arrangement or covenant was sealed by the Saviour's Blood. He not only was party to it on our behalf in the eternal ages, but He has, according to ancient custom, sealed it with His Blood, *in the name of the Holy Trinity.*

In the old time every covenant was sealed by blood-shedding, which meant, May God take my life if I fail or prove false! (See Gen. xv. and Exod. xxiv.) But in our case the pledge of God to us who have come to Christ has been ratified by richer, more precious blood. On the eve of Calvary Jesus took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of

the new covenant"—new, *i. e.* in the sense of it being now for the first time explained and ratified. When, therefore, we sit at the Table of our Lord and drink of the cup, we do well, if, in addition to the memory of the past, we look into the face of Christ and say reverently and gladly, "We thank Thee, not only for making us Thine, but for entering into a solemn covenant on our behalf, and making that covenant sure by the ratification of Thy Blood!" We are therefore secure in the position which grace has given us, not simply by the promise of God, but by His oath, sealed by the blood of the Cross. This is the meaning of the phrase, "the great Shepherd . . . through the blood of the eternal covenant." The text might be rendered thus: "May God, the source of all peace, who brought back from the dead Him who by virtue of His blood gave validity to the eternal covenant."

3. *The Eternal God, "the God of Peace," cannot do less for the Flock than He has done for the Great Shepherd.* As our Lord went down into the valley of death and breathed His departing spirit into the Father's hands, He knew that He would not be left in Sheol, nor allowed to see corruption; He knew that the keys of Death and Hades were to hang at His girdle; He knew that the path of life would be unfolded. And God did not fail Him. "Him God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." By the dead lift of Omnipotence the God of Peace raised from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep. Will He do so much for the Shepherd, and fail His flock? Will He crown Jesus with glory and honor, and not make us fit to stand with Him in the glory as

His brethren and sisters? Is the Body not to be worthy of the Head, and the Bride of the Bridegroom? Is not the power that raised Him from the literal grave in Joseph's garden adequate to the task of lifting us out of the grave of sin to a life of righteousness, and making us worthy to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? Take heart! The Lord will perfect that which concerneth thee. His mercy endureth for ever. He will not forsake the work of His own hands. The flock shall be worthy of its great Shepherd, and therefore God may be reckoned upon to put us in joint, and to work in us what is well pleasing in His sight.

4. *He is the God of Peace.* This is most comforting. The operation of readjusting the will is not always a very agreeable one. The bringing our will into line with His will must sometimes cost a midnight wrestle at the Jabbok ford, where Jacob met the Angel, and sometimes a Garden of Gethsemane with its anguish, after our poor human measure. But the God of the gentle zephyr, of the evening calm, of the mother's brooding care, may be trusted to do His necessary work as gently and tenderly as possible. Also remember that His work in the heart is equally gentle. He is not in the earthquake or the fire, but in the still small voice. He does not strive or cry. Therefore we must be prepared to coöperate with and answer the gentlest pressure of His will.

An elderly woman told me after one of my addresses that she heard me speak some twenty years ago, and felt the radiance of God on her heart till ten on the following morning, when God bade her go and be reconciled to her sister. But she did not go, so the light

faded away, and, for all the following years, she had never recovered it. I told her to pick up the thread of obedience where she dropped it, and go even now. But her sister had died! We must take care! The touch of the God of Peace is often gentle and soft. But it always says one and the same thing, and at the same time gives power to obey. Do not be disobedient. Be not faithless, but believing. Ask God always to speak loud enough for you to hear. And when His voice, however still and small, breaks on your inner ear, reply: "Speak, for Thy servant heareth."

The great fear which haunted the Apostle Paul was lest he should be rejected, and a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27). Not that he should ever be cast away from God's love, or heaven; but that he should cease to be used in the Master's service. Nothing is more terrible than when a man, who was greatly used of God, is dropped out of His use, and is no longer employed on His errands (see Jer. i. 7 [marg.]). Let each of us see to it that we never thwart God's probing and purifying of our hearts, or His desire to put us in joint with His Son.

XII

NOT WATER ONLY

"The servants that drew the water knew."—John ii. 9.

CANA was a little village, inhabited for the most part by vine-dressers, who tended the vines on the slopes of the hills which descended to the great plain of Esdraelon, running east to west from the Lake of Galilee to Mount Carmel. We can almost see the little white houses embowered in a wealth of green foliage, looking down on that famous battleground. Thither our Lord came direct from the Jordan valley, where He had been recently baptized. He brought with Him five disciples, who had been introduced to Him by the Baptist, and who were probably rather startled to find themselves suddenly transplanted from the austerity of the Baptist's life into the festive scenes of a marriage. Among the Jews the feast would be spread over several days, the guests going to their homes and business during the day, and returning to the feast at night.

Probably the family by whom this feast was being given was related to the home at Nazareth. This would account for the presence of Mary, and also of Jesus. In any case, the Lord would receive a very hearty welcome, and it must have greatly astonished His new-found friends to discover the ease with which He entered the happy circle, augmenting their glad-

ness, as the children asked Him to tell His picture-stories, and the young girls twined garlands about His neck, and the men discussed the promise of the harvest or vintage. They must have felt startled at first, but, finally, would say to each other, as the feast drew to a close, "After all, this is the religion that the world is waiting for. Men are weary of the synagogue formalities, and cannot climb to the asceticism of the Baptist, but if this is religion, we will gladly embrace it, and will endeavor to spread it. This is the religion for which the world is waiting!"

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. Apparently the general management and catering had been left to her. Perhaps she was known throughout the district for her housewifely skill, and whenever there was such a feast she was asked to make all arrangements. She was a matron of some fifty years of age, and her dark hair was already becoming streaked with grey. But every one said that she was looking brighter than for many a day. A new light in her eyes; a new spring in her step! And there was good reason for it, because news had come to her of the happenings in the Jordan valley, and that the famous Baptist had welcomed Jesus. Some said that they had seen a kind of light flitting over Him as He emerged from the water of baptism, and there were confused rumors about a Voice. For thirty years she had been waiting for Jesus to do something to vindicate her honor and to place an unmistakable seal on Joseph's act in sheltering her; but nothing of the sort had happened. Jesus had indeed lived a lovely life, as she could testify. But Joseph had died, without having seen God's vindication of his noble act. Now,

however, it seemed as though the mother stood face to face with great unfoldings.

As the meal went forward, the unexpected accession of disciples, whom Jesus brought with Him, depleted the wine supply, and the mother whispered to Jesus that the wine was running short. She knew that there was no need to do more than that. In prayer there is no necessity to suggest to God what He should do in an emergency. The suggestion of our need is sufficient; He knows the way out of the perplexity. He holds the solution of the problem. Addressing her with the same courtly title of "Woman," such as Emperors would employ to their queens, the Saviour replied that He also was carefully watching the clock, and that the exact predestined hour had not yet arrived. Remember that Jesus watches the minute hand!

Presently He turned to the leader of the little group of volunteers, who were waiting on the guests, and asked him to have the water-jars filled up. That request was a severe test to their obedient faith. Those great jars stood in the vestibule of the house. Each would hold about twenty gallons; and they had already fulfilled their purpose. They did not hold the drinking-water, but, as we are expressly told, were used for the Jewish rites of purification. As the guests had entered, water drawn from those jars had been poured over their hands and feet, according to Eastern custom, where the sand and heat and perspiration demand the frequent application of refreshing water. Probably by this time they were nearly empty, and it would be no small labor to draw sufficient water from some neighboring well or spring. The men also were

needed to attend on the guests. To-morrow would surely be time enough to fill these capacious jars in anticipation of the fresh relay of visitors.

There was no hesitation, however. Mary had already instructed them to do whatever Jesus might command; and at once, leaving all else, these willing hearts and hands were soon engaged in their somewhat arduous toil. It was no half-hearted service, however; and we learn that they filled them up "*to the brim.*" So full were they that if a chance leaf, driven by the breeze, had alighted on the brimming contents of one of those great water-jars, it would have overflowed and spilled a few drops on the floor.

Let us notice here: (1) The necessity of obeying exactly and immediately the commands of that "inner voice," which may always be recognized by two signs: it never asks questions, but is always direct and explicit, and it generally asks for an obedience which is against, or above, what we by nature feel disposed to give. It is the voice of the Spirit of God! Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it! Not yours to question why; not yours to make reply. "He who says 'Yes,' responds, obeys, coöperates, and allows this Christ-Light to have full sway in him, becomes transformed thereby, and re-created into the likeness of Christ, by whom the inner seed was planted, and of whose nature it is."

(2) Whenever you do anything for Jesus, do it up to the brimful measure. It may be a very small thing: to take a class of poor children; to pay a visit to a dying man or woman; to write a letter; but let the response be always brimful. The jar is your opportunity! A very common jar! An act which seems

unnecessary and inconvenient; but out of it will probably arise the greatest achievement of your Christian service. When Jesus and you have entered into co-partnership, be sure that you do your bit with all your heart and might. Let there be nothing lacking on your side. It is an amazing thing that the Lord should want our help, and honor us by making us His fellow-workers. Let us show ourselves worthy of His trust.

A most wonderful thing took place when the jars were filled. Two explanations have been hazarded for the startling change. Some suppose that the whole contents of those six jars were turned to wine. If it were so, it would not have hurt any one, because the wine would resemble the pure juice of the grape, as used in many of our churches to-day. It is very palatable and entirely innocent. I question, however, if that were our Lord's method, because, when He fed the five thousand, He did not make two heaps, one of fish, the other of bread, and bid the apostles come and help themselves: but as they broke what they carried in their hands, it was renewed. This is not more wonderful than the ordinary slower processes of nature. A miracle is simply the action of natural forces, that usually operate over a considerable period of time, but are compressed by divine power into an instant.

If we use this analogy to guide us, a fresh and beautiful conception will arise. We are told that " the servants who drew the water knew." The emphatic reference here laid on their drawing water confirms the particular point we have just made. They drew water from the brimming jars, but as they crossed the

passage to the tables where the guests reclined, they saw it flush into wine. But only *they* knew when the miracle took place. When we work with Jesus, we get to understand His methods; He unfolds to us His secrets. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He shows them His covenant. We, the servants, know many things hidden from the wise and prudent.

Many of us realize that this miracle is constantly taking place. We spend a week thinking out and preparing an address. We fill the water-pots to the brim. But at the end of the days of preparation we look sadly on what we have done and say to ourselves: "After all, it is very poor stuff—*only water.*" Yet when we are speaking, and see faces suffused with emotion—here radiance, there repentance not to be repented of—we know that the Master has been collaborating with us, and has turned the water into wine.

Sometimes the contrary is the case. What we thought to be wine, and made great efforts to serve as wine, turns out to be very poor stuff, and the people go away uninspired, uncomforted, unhelped. They know the difference which Jesus makes, when a sermon is filled with the unction and power of His Spirit.

Let us suppose that those servants had poured out only water to the assembled guests, it would have been viewed as an insult to the party, and a lasting disgrace to the young married pair. What could have prevented such a catastrophe, if Jesus had failed to make His contribution? But He made the water wine. Was not this first miracle a foreshadowing of those words of the Apostle John in his first Epistle: "This

is he who came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood"?

Generally that verse is taken to refer to a noticeable fact, especially alluded to by the Evangelist in his description of our Saviour's death. The soldiers were surprised to find Him dead. It was unusual that one in the prime of life should succumb so soon. They could not account for it; but that they might fulfil their duty faithfully, one of them "with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water."

Such is the testimony of an eye-witness; and John lays great stress on this occurrence, for he adds these words: "This testimony is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe." Why is this testimony so valuable? How does it add to the weight of evidence of our Saviour's death? Any physician could tell us. Our Lord's death was caused by the actual rupture of His heart, as the result of the awful agony caused when, as our substitute, He was "made sin."

Surely this scene was in the thought of John when he recorded this first miracle, and laid stress on the water turned to wine, for wine is the product of the vine, and the vine, as Mrs. Hampton King explains in the sermon by Ugo Bassi, in the hospital, is the most suffering of all plants, from the pruning of its shoots in the spring to the trampling of the grapes in the autumn wine-press. May we not, therefore, learn this lesson both from our dear Lord's Death on the Cross, and also from His gift of the blood of the grape as an ingredient in the wedding feast, that no gift of ours to others is worthy unless it contains the element

of self-sacrifice. In His first miracle He created the ingredient of the wine from the water. At the Last Supper He said, as He passed around the wine, "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many"; and John lays emphasis on the fact that He came by blood, as well as by water; *and* that the blood is one with the Spirit and the water in their common witness.

This, then, is at least one of the lessons to be learned from the first miracle. We must be prepared to mingle the element of self-sacrifice with all our giving, if we would really help others. The individual or the Church that fails to give the blood of self-sacrifice is not likely to contribute to the uplift either of individual lives or of society. A proper challenge to any reformer who proposes to save society is "Show us your hands! Let us see the nail-prints."

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth:
For Love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
And whoso suffers most hath most to give.
How poor were earth, if all its Martyrdoms,
If all its struggling sighs of sacrifice,
Were swept away, and all were satiate!"

It is a beautiful privilege to work along with Christ, but we shall not serve that blessed apprenticeship long without learning this lesson, that He has no pleasure in service rendered to Himself or to others that does not cost us blood. This is characteristic of His own service to the world, and you will find that He will soon drop you out unless you also are prepared in your measure to surrender yourself to the blood-let-

ting, which alone counts in the service of humanity. As we look out on society to-day we can understand why so many lives are unhappy. They have never learned that the one secret of happiness is to give to the point of self-denial and self-sacrifice. As Phillips Brooks has put it, they need something to happen which shall force them out on the open ocean of complete self-sacrifice. "If only a slow quiet tide or a furious storm would come and break every rope that binds them to the wooden wharves of their own interests, and carry them clear out to sea! . . . The soul that trifles and toys with self-sacrifice can achieve neither its true joy nor its power. Only the soul that gives itself up for ever to the life of others can know the delight and peace which such surrender gives."

This trace of blood in our actions is a matter that we can never talk about. When it is being shed, we must anoint our heads and wash our faces, that men may have no inkling of what is happening. Neither the right hand nor the left must know, nor divulge the secret. It should be remembered also that we have no right to deprive wife or child of whatever is necessary. It must be a personal act, reacting on no one but yourself. *You* must be the one who gives blood, not they! Keep happy and smiling! When Jesus was performing this miracle there was no strain or effort, no wrinkle on His forehead, no cloud upon His smile. He drew no attention to Himself; needed no thanks; stole away unrecognized, at least for the moment, as the Giver.

Of course there is no merit in such actions, which add joy to the marriage feasts of our friends and beneficiaries, any more than in a hair-shirt worn next

the skin. Jesus knows, and you know; and you know that He knows. A smile has passed between Him and you, and it is enough. Probably He will give you larger and wider opportunities as the days run on. Blessed are they that help to save weddings from disgrace and little children from sorrow, because they have learned in the school of Jesus that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

The best wine kept till last! Yes, that is the habit of Jesus. The world puts its best on the table first; but the best is soon exhausted. Soon the sparkle is gone from the youth, and the color from the maiden's cheek; but Jesus always gives better and better, so that after we have been with Him an age of ages, and tell Him that it is better than ever, He will reply that it is only the beginning. May He not be saying to us all, therefore, as we pass on:

"Grow old along with me.
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made"?

XIII

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

"*I am Alpha and Omega.*"—Rev. i. 8, 17, ii. 8, xxii. 13.

IT is hardly necessary to explain that these are the first and the last letters in the Greek alphabet. Obviously they represent all the intervening letters, which they enclose as in a golden clasp. On those letters was built the entire literature of that wonderful people. Plato, Socrates, Sophocles, Thucydides, and Aristotle built up their reasoning, teachings, systems, and histories on the letters contained between Alpha and Omega. This metaphor, as the references indicate, is in frequent use throughout the Apocalypse.

The majestic announcement at the opening of the book (chap. i. 8) refers to the Eternal God. His nature underlies the whole created universe, all races of being, the entire work of redemption, the destiny of His children, the ultimate victory of righteousness, order, and peace; all that has been, is, or shall be is conditioned by His existence. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to discover a more comprehensive formulary for Him who was, and is, and is to come, than this, "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever." We can almost hear the unceasing chant of the four living creatures, which are before the throne, who rest not day and night, saying, both when God's purposes

are evident and when they are veiled, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Let us worship before the immutable and eternal Lord God Almighty, joining in that ceaseless chant. He is the First and the Last, and beside Him there is no other!

In our thinking we must distinguish between that side of His ineffable nature, which has revealed itself in the universe, in the creation of Man, and in Jesus Christ, and that side of His nature which transcends our thought, infinite, eternal, self-existent. In the one He has revealed Himself so far as the naked spirit of man can endure the almost insufferable light. In the other is that which no man hath seen or can see, that which we can only describe by negatives, that before which angels veil their faces with their wings. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him."

What audacity it is to rush into His presence, without the due preparation and reverence of the heart. Even Moses was bidden to unloose his sandals when the bush burned with fire. But does it not stand to reason that, as we cannot know this great Being by the intellect, so we must give time to our fellowship with Him? We must wait before Him till the glare and noise of this clamorous world cease to monopolize our sense, and we are acclimatized to the conditions of His manifested presence. Dr. Lyman Abbot has said truly that the profoundest truths of spiritual experience are those which are not intellectually ascertained, but spiritually discerned. They are not taught to us, but revealed. They defy definition, they transcend

expression. So it must be in our fellowship with God. He is our Father. He loves us infinitely, but He is the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Such is the abyss of the Godhead for which we have no fathoming-line! We have, as Job puts it, only a whisper of Him in His works, and in Jesus a manifestation of only so much as can be translated into human speech.

In the other quotations named above, the Lord Jesus appropriates to Himself these august words, though He was meek and lowly, and emptied Himself. When the fainting disciple whom He loved fell at His feet as one dead; when the Church at Smyrna needed encouragement to remain faithful unto death; when spirits athirst for God, in this life or the next, cry out for the living water; when the way has to be opened through the gates of the city to the Tree of Life, He quotes, in part or as a whole, these majestic words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

The very pressing question of this hour is to ascertain whether each of us is making enough of personal contact with Christ. We hear about Him, read of Him, talk about Him, but how far do we really know Him? Might He not say rather sadly to some of us, as to Philip: "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" On the other hand, Paul said: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord . . . that I may know him!"

Trusting and Knowing

We may sometimes question whether we should ever have known Jesus Christ had it not been for the urgent needs forced on us by this human life. We have seen that we are tempted in order that we may know things by knowing their contrasts and opposites. To know light, we must needs know darkness; to know good, we must know evil, not by yielding to it but by resistance. Let us carry that thought further, and question whether the blessed beings in other worlds will ever appreciate the Saviour as we can, who have wintered and summered with Him, during our earthly life. May not this have been in Paul's mind when he said: "I know him whom I trusted"? He trusted Christ almost before he knew Him; but having travelled with Him for thirty years, he had come to know Him. In an Alpine village, you engage your guide to take you to the summit of Mont Blanc. He has been recommended as eminently reliable, and you trust him with your life. But during every subsequent hour you are testing him; you see how carefully he picks the path, how strong his arm and keen his eye, how quick he is to notice and prepare against the gathering avalanche. At the end of your sojourn in that mountain village you know him for yourself. You trusted in the word of another, but you now believe in him because of your personal experience. So with our Lord, we trust Him at the beginning of life on what we are told, but as the years pass we come to know Him with a certainty which asks no confirmation elsewhere.

Christ the Complement of Our Need

A mathematical figure may help us here. Draw on paper or slate a small curve. That is obviously far away from being a circle; but you can easily *complete the circle,* of which the curve becomes a part. So in human life, Jesus Christ is the complement, or completement, of our need. He comes to us in the smallness of our patience, faith, hope, or love, and He adds Himself to our great need, and makes the perfect circle.

We may go further, and say that very often God allows our helplessness and failure to become extraordinarily acute in order that His grace may have a larger opportunity. It is only when we have reached our greatest extremity that we begin to realize what Jesus is prepared to be and do.

It was only when Sennacherib came against Jerusalem with scaling-ladders and the full equipment for capturing a fortified city that Isaiah and Hezekiah discovered that God was prepared to be "a place of broad rivers and streams," and that there was a river —the river of His protecting care—which could make glad the city of God. Of course there was no literal river; but God made good that lack, and Himself became all that a river could have been. He was thus the complement of their need!

It was only when Ezra, on the return of the Jews to their own land, halted at the river Euphrates, that he awoke to the peril of crossing the great wilderness, inhabited by robber tribes. But in answer to united prayer, God promised to go before the procession, and become its rear-guard. Jehovah Himself became the

complement of their need! They would not have realized what He could do for them in this direction had they been fully defended by bands of soldiers.

The sisters of Bethany would never have known the Master's imperial glory as the Resurrection and the Life, had mortal sickness not overtaken Lazarus and carried him to his grave. In their dire sorrow and distress Jesus became their complement as the Resurrection and the Life. In after years they were glad to have had such a sorrow, which left them enriched for ever with that unexpected revelation.

Paul himself would never have known what Jesus could be unless he had been beset by that thorn in his flesh. There was a phase in the Saviour's grace which he had never known unless that infirmity had befallen him. Then he realized that his sufferings had provided a new angle of vision, a better platform for God's saving help. Therefore he was willing rather to suffer, that the power of Christ might compensate for his deficiency; for when he was weak the strength of the Son of God was more than enough.

Let us look at some of the disabilities named in this Book; and when we have set them down, let us take the letters out of the alphabet of our Lord's nature, and spell out the word most suited to bring out salient characteristics of the saving help of His right hand.

Rev. i. 17: *Loneliness is an opportunity for Jesus to make Himself known.* The beloved apostle was alone on the Isle of Patmos, but at the same moment he was "in the Spirit," and the Spirit revealed the Lord. There ensued that fellowship, which began in what seemed at first a revelation almost too great to be borne by human flesh and blood. "I fell at his feet

as one dead." Then Christ laid His hand upon him and lifted him up, and revealed to him the mystery of His own eternal life. The ancient mystics went to the deserts in order to obtain that vision; but in quiet lonely hours, as we walk beside the ocean, or climb the mountain, or sit in our own room, He will come and manifest Himself as He does not to the world. But you must let the silt fall to the bottom; you must allow time for the glare of the world to die out from your eyes. There must also be the spirit's steadfast attention turned towards the unseen; the unwearied and loving meditation and prayer, and the atmosphere of Christian love. The failure of any of these will make it impossible to see or feel Jesus nigh.

Thomas à Kempis says: "Shut thy door upon thee and call unto Jesus, thy Love. When Jesus is nigh all goodness is nigh and nothing seemeth hard; but when He is not nigh all things are hard. If Jesus speaks one word, there is great comfort. To be without Jesus is a grievous hell, and to be with Jesus is a sweet Paradise. If Jesus be with thee, there may no enemy hurt thee. It is a great craft for a man to be conversant with Jesus; and to know how to hold Jesus is a great prudence."

But it must be remembered that fellowship like this is full of inspiration. The revelation given to John was instantly followed by *the command to write.* The soul, therefore, that is illumined by fellowship with Christ becomes, to use an ancient illustration, like the cherubim who went and came as the Lord directed. Thus holy souls, invigorated and renewed by communion with Jesus, while they wait upon Him, receive direction and instruction as to the errands they

are to undertake, and they go forth to minister as He may direct. The heavenly character, seated within them, wills their movements through His loving guidance given to their hearts. He nourishes them with food celestial and enables them with grace sufficient for their day.

When, therefore, you are lonely; when, like John on the Lord's day in Patmos, you seem to hear the hymns and prayers which you can join only in spirit, turn to the Lord Himself and ask Him to bear you company. That loneliness constitutes a claim on Him. If you had not experienced it, you would not have learned what He can be and do when He draws near saying, "Fear not." He will not leave you orphaned, He will come to you. Though lover and friend forsake, and you are passing through a dark valley unattended, the Good Shepherd will accompany you, armed with a crook to help you out of pitfalls, and a club for your foes. Therefore out of the letters of the alphabet of His being let us choose those that spell: *"Unfailing Friend!"*

Rev. iii. 8–11: *Hours of suffering give opportunities for Jesus to become known.* Like the Church at Smyrna, on which the first sparks of fiery trial were falling, the child of God is often called to take the way of the Cross. With its suffering, its injustice, its humiliation, its bitterness, it has been trodden by millions, and has been called "the King's highway." One holy soul says: "There is none other way to life and inward peace but the way of the Cross." But nothing has brought out so much of the love and help of Jesus!

This is specially marked in the life of the Apostle

Paul. Few men have come anywhere near him in the ordeal of anguish and pain. "We are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things." He was always bearing about the dying of Jesus. Poverty, persecution, ill-health, the hatred of the Jewish party; these were the deep waters he was called to cross and recross. But in it all he was more than conqueror through Him that loved him. Jesus was nearer him than the chill waters. True, he suffered for Christ, but Christ suffered with him. His Lord stood by him, then who could stand against him? His spirit seems to have become full of a divine optimism, as he challenges life and death, height and depth, to separate him from the love of God. Do not let us fear suffering or pain. Do not allow yourself to shrink back when Jesus leads you into the dark chamber. He walks the furnace kindled to seven times its ordinary heat. Martyrs have asked that they might not be taken from the rack, so ecstatic were the peace and joy poured into their hearts. Sufferers for long years on beds of pain have affirmed that they would not have chosen otherwise, since the Saviour has made that chamber of pain as the vestibule of heaven. There are also experiences of suffering which are worse than most of those endured in the physical sphere, but Jesus is always standing there with the crown of life to place on the head of the overcomer. Let us not complain of our sufferings, or the lack of human sympathy, or allow people to criticize the Divine Lover; let us rather rejoice that He has trusted us with pain and disability that His power may more richly rest on us. "Be thou faithful unto death, sentry, at thy post." The First and the Last is with

thee. He passed through death to a fuller life; so shalt thou!

The thousands of sick folk who were brought from every part of Galilee revealed healing qualities in Jesus that would have remained unknown had they not thronged around Him. The leper revealed His purity; the paralyzed His nervous energy; the dying His power of life. Each was a prism to break up rays of color hidden in His pure Manhood. So each trial and sorrow which He comes into our lives to share reveals to us, and to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, some new phase of that wonderful Being who is the complement of our infirmities.

Therefore, out of the alphabet of His being, let us choose the letters that spell: *"Wonderful Healer!"*

Rev. xxi. 6, 7: *Hours of thirst give opportunities for a more intimate knowledge of Jesus.* If the woman of Sychar had not been driven by thirst, she would not have visited the well at the noon of that memorable day; and if it were not for the thirst of their souls for satisfaction, men would never say with David: "As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." If we were perfectly supplied from ourselves, we should never know what Christ can be. We are suffered to hunger and thirst that we should not trust in ourselves, but in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy. There are those among us who have an immense capacity for love, but have never been married because a suitable partner has never been forthcoming. They love children, but have none of their own. They thirst, but perhaps, like Hagar, they have never real-

ized that a fountain is within reach; it is the personal Love of Jesus.

But the special reference in this passage is not to the present, but to the future. The first heaven and the first earth have passed away! The judgment is over, and Death and Hades have ceased for ever! The seas of division and storm are no more! The conquerors and overcomers have come into their blessed heritage, of which they have been made heirs! Yet even in that beatific state there will be thirst! Jesus says "All is over, I am Alpha and Omega, I will give to him that is athirst."

Yes, even in that life there will be need for supplies from outside ourselves. Even there we shall not be independent of Him. As the circle of light grows, the circumference of darkness will grow. As we know more, we, like Newton, shall feel we are but gathering shells on the shores of a boundless ocean. The flock will lie down in green pastures, and be led in paths of righteousness, but we shall never reach the last fountain nor be able to dispense with the presence or lead of our Saviour. When we have drunk of one set of wells, He will lead us further and more deeply into the recesses of eternity. He will still guide us to further fountains of living water. Oh, blessed absence of self-sufficiency! We shall never be self-contained! Never able to dispense with Christ! But, as our nature expands, as new yearnings arise, as fresh deeps call to deeps, we shall only learn more and more of His all-sufficiency, as the way, the truth, and the life.

Therefore, out of the letters of His alphabet of being, let us choose those that spell: *"Immortal Lover!"*

Rev. xxii. 14: *When we are most deeply conscious of sin, it will reveal the purity and redeeming love of Jesus.* In these closing verses of the Apocalypse we are back again in the earth-life, though the Master assures us that He is coming very soon. This verse contains the last beatitude that is uttered from the throne of His Ascension. The reading of the Revised Version is full of beauty, and is to be preferred to that of our Authorized Bibles. Thus for "Blessed are they that keep his commandments," we now read, as in an earlier passage (chap. vii. 14) of those who *have* washed their robes. It is evidently a glance back from the eternal world at an experience long past, although its blessed influence still abides. But here it is, "They are washing their robes." It is the present tense, and therefore a present experience, in a present world.

Alas! that we ever had to come to wash our robes in His most precious blood. Alas! that we need to come so often to wash them. It is a terrible thing to be a sinner! It does not seem so terrible, because this is a world of sinners, and we have never seen a sinless one. The child born in a leper colony cannot realize what leprosy is, nor what the child of noble and pure birth is like. But we know enough to repent in dust and ashes and cry "Unclean," as did Isaiah when he beheld the glory of the Lord. And yet! And yet! —we should never otherwise have known the love of Christ, the wonder of His forgiving grace, His patience, His tender forbearance, His fathomless humility in stooping to wash our feet. Yes, Augustine, we understand what you mean when you say, "*O beata culpa.*" "O blessed fault!" Yet we dare

not sin that grace may abound, lest we open again His wounds. But, in our hours of contrition, we have glimpses into the heart of God in Christ, which unfallen natures cannot share. Therefore, out of the alphabet of His being, let us choose letters to spell: "*The Friend of Sinners!*"

"Move through the flames with transcendent form
As of the Son of God, in splendor move!
Divide the anguish, breast with us the storm,
Companion perfect grief with perfect Love!"

XIV

THE QUIET HEART

"Sit still, my daughter, . . . for the man will not rest till he hath finished the thing this day."

—Ruth iii. 18.

UNLESS the heart is at rest, it will not be possible to minister the real help and comfort that this weary world needs. We must learn the innermost secret of Him who bade the weary and heavy-laden to rest. Christ's secret is not to relieve us of our labor or our responsibilities, but to give us the secret of tranquillity.

We will borrow an illustration from the Old Testament, which will light up and enforce our lesson, and then consider how the heart may beat quietly in respect to all the prayers, problems, and purposes of life.

Outside the little town of Bethlehem, situated on the brow of one of the Judæan hills, was a piece of land which was an eyesore and a nuisance to the entire neighborhood. For years it had lain neglected. Thistles, rubbish, and rank growth covered it, the seeds of which were scattered far and wide. It was a disgrace to the town, and every one that passed by asked to whom it belonged. It was the property of two women—the elder, a lone widow who had recently returned from Moab, whither her husband and she had gone in a fit of unbelief some years before;

but she had returned, leaving three graves behind. A young woman had accompanied her, cleaving faithfully to her in loving ministry. Out of pure sympathy she had turned her back on home and friends, the land of her birth, and the temple of her god; had crossed the mountains with her sacred charge, and had adopted her people, her fatherland, her God, little dreaming that her name would become indissolubly connected with Bethlehem's greatest Son, and with the Saviour of the world!

As these two, late one afternoon, walked along the main street of Bethlehem, the women sitting at their cottage doors recognized in the elder woman the playmate of their girlhood. They had last seen her as a happy wife and mother, and had wished her well as she was starting for Moab; but they shook their heads after she had passed with sad forebodings. Probably the old home had remained untenanted, and there the two sheltered themselves, depending for their food on the result of the younger woman's gleaning in the neighboring fields, where the barley harvest was being reaped.

There she had good success, but permanent improvement of their position could only come through some arrangement concerning that piece of land and the disposal of the young girl's life, in accordance with Hebrew law and precedent. As far as Naomi understood the case, the future of both lay at the discretion of a leading citizen, a near kinsman of her husband, Boaz by name, who had reached middle life, was still unmarried, of great wealth, high ideals, and universally respected and beloved. His presence in the councils of his people was a guarantee of order and

righteousness; and his word was his bond. Secretly the mother's heart was constantly turning towards this man. She knew that he could be trusted, and rejoiced when Ruth returned with warm praise of the kind words he had addressed to her, the only doubt being whether he would be willing to do the kinsman's part, or would devolve it on a more distant member of the clan.

She was overjoyed, therefore, when she learned that he was prepared to do all that might be necessary to save the name of the dead, and rehabilitate the family fortunes. One further difficulty, however, had to be faced. There was a nearer kinsman, who might assert his rights. Owing, however, to some flaw in the leasehold of the property, and also to his reluctance to marry this Moabite girl, no further obstacle blocked the benevolent plans which, beneath the guidance of God's Spirit, had formulated themselves in the mind and heart of Boaz.

The solution of the matter, which was being settled in the city gate by a council of elders, hastily summoned, involved considerable delay. Hour after hour passed in the leisurely formalities, and it was probably the late afternoon when the matter was settled. In the meanwhile the two women awaited the verdict. The older woman had read the evident leadings of Providence, and was morally sure of the issue. She knew the character of Boaz, and was confident that he would not fail in this crisis. But Ruth found it hard to be patient. She was constantly rising to her feet, going to the door, looking up and down the street, feverish with excitement, unable to control herself amid the lights and shadows that chased each other

across her heart. Presently the elder woman interfered and said: "Sit still, daughter; we have placed the whole matter in the hands of Boaz. He is an honorable man, a man of his word, a man of decision and despatch. What he has undertaken he will carry out. The man will not rest till he has finished the thing this day. Let us reckon on him, and be at rest. Sit still! Sit still!"

So the day passed on. At last they heard steps in the silent street, and Boaz entered the cottage with a kindly look on his face, saying: "It is all settled. The next kinsman prefers not to prejudice his present position by assuming the tenure of this piece of land, the title-deeds to which are not very reliable. I therefore will assume his place, take the land under my care, and to you, Ruth, I offer my hand in marriage." Oh, joy, joy, joy! After the night of weeping comes the morning of joy! A glint of sunlight crossed the rugged outlines of the woman's face; while Ruth understood what Boaz had meant when he had spoken before of her resting beneath the wings of the Shechinah.

The story is a beautiful one, and though the Judges ruled, and storms of anarchy and conflict hurtled through the air, it proved that the heart of Israel was sound, and that in thousands of homes throughout the country the sweet religious spirit and primitive courtesies of life prevailed. Yes, and there are scores of men around us to-day who, if an appeal were made by some poor relative to see that justice was done, would at once undertake the case, and see it through.

But we have a further reason for retelling this old-world tale. An inheritance was once given to men,

an inheritance which stood for three things—harmony with God, harmony between man and man, harmony with the wonderful world of nature in which our home is found amid the myriad orbs of space. But it is a lost, a forfeited inheritance! Paradise has vanished from the earth, like a picture of the landscape in a calm lake, which is suddenly lashed into foam by a hurricane. The twin rivers, the Euphrates and Tigris, flow past what was once its site, but is now a barren waste of sand. As the literal Eden has vanished, so man's harmony with nature, with himself, and with God has also vanished. Humanity is in much the same plight as were Naomi and Ruth. The one thing that stands between us and despair, as we look out on the world of to-day, is the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Everything depends on whether our Lord in those distant spaces of heavenly purity and order will stand true to the race with which He is so closely connected, and whether He will succeed. But we can have no doubt whatever! As Boaz claimed that estate, and made it a valuable addition to his own holding, so we may dare to believe that Jesus Christ will never rest till this sin-stained, distracted, and devil-cursed world is restored to her primitive order and beauty! Let each repeat to his or her troubled and anxious heart those words of Naomi, giving them their furthest reference to our great Kinsman, Christ! "Sit still! Sit still! Jesus will not be at rest until He has finished the work which the Father has given Him to do, and to which in the eternal council chamber, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, He pledged Himself."

He is our near Kinsman by His definite choice to

descend to the cradle at Bethlehem and become flesh of our flesh. He went so far as to die for our redemption! His bloody sweat and the blood and water of His broken heart have consecrated His union with our race. He need not have died, but might have stepped into heaven from the Transfiguration Mount. He has carried our nature to heaven, and that is the indissoluble bond between Him and us. "Sit still! Sit still! He will make all things new! He will not rest until He has finished the great purpose which He has been steadfastly pursuing from eternal ages!"

I. *Our Prayers.* But there is a personal aspect of the matter, on which we desire to insist. We must calm our anxious, restless, tumultuous souls by reckoning on Christ in respect to our personal needs. When once we have thoughtfully, deliberately, and prayerfully handed over to Him some matter of vital interest, we must dare to believe that He has taken it in hand, and that, though He may keep us waiting, He will not be at rest until He has finished it. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth us; his mercy endureth for ever, and he will not forsake the work of his own hands." There are three levels in prayer, which correspond with the three levels of life, the child, the wrestler in mid-current, and the mature believer.

The first of these is unfolded in the Sermon on the Mount. We ask for things we need. We seek for truth, and right understanding, as a man seeks for goodly pearls. We knock for admittance into personal fellowship and communion. All through our life we require these; but they are very characteristic of the child's simplicity.

The second we find in the story of the widow's conflict with the unrighteous judge. She united herself with the authority of his judicial position against the high-handed injustice of her oppressor. Thus did Luther wrestle against the Pope, and Wilberforce against the slave-dealer. Thus do holy souls contend against the wrongs perpetrated on the helpless.

The third we find often referred to in the closing months of our Lord's life. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"; "He shall have whatsoever he saith"; "Believe that ye have received, and ye shall have"; "Have faith in God," which, as Hudson Taylor was wont to say, is equivalent to "Reckon on God's faith or faithfulness to you." These latter quotations clearly indicate that there is something more in Prayer than we have been accustomed to think.

Prayer is the coöperation of the human spirit with the divine. As a slight noise will sometimes dislodge an avalanche, so the prayer of faith sets in motion the power of the ascended Christ. Believing prayer supplies the Almighty with the fulcrum on which He rests the lever of His omnipotence. Prayer is the union of the divine and human, so that, as the human body of our Lord was the channel through which divine life-power was able to flow, so the prayer of faith opens a fresh channel for the grace and help of God to come to man.

But prayer of this kind has two characteristics. First, we wait for the Holy Spirit to teach us what to pray for. He must make intercession for the saints according to the will of God. We cannot impose our thoughts and wills on God, but must seek for Him to

impose His upon us. Only thus do we know that we are in the line of His purposes, and that we have our petitions. Second, we cease to worry. However long the interval, however strong the combination of adverse circumstances, we can sit still, with the patience of an unwavering faith, being assured that Christ will not rest until He has finished the thing with which we have entrusted Him. The climax of the life of prayer is that sense of fellowship between Christ and ourselves. It is the communion of the Holy Spirit. We reckon on God's faithfulness to so large an extent that definite asking is exchanged for quiet waiting.

May the simplicity of the following illustration be forgiven? Years ago we owned a favorite dog, which used to leap up at us when we sat at meals, with a boisterous appeal for remembrance that became troublesome. By strong action on our part we convinced him that this behavior must cease; and then he was cunning enough to invent a method of appeal which was absolutely irresistible. He would sit under the table, and place one little padded fore-foot on my knee. That tiny pressure has so often returned to my mind, when I have prayed, and come to know that I had obtained the petitions that I had asked. The actual moment of reception might not have arrived. It was impossible to go on asking. To do so would invalidate the assurance of having obtained one's petition: but the restful attitude of the soul is assured. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." "So the woman (Hannah) went her way and did eat, and was no more sad." Build thy nest high in the mountains of God's faithfulness, above the mists and joys of the lower plains! Get

thine assurance direct from the lips of thy Lord. Then thou wilt have sure anchorage, which will hold though long years intervene! Sit still, yea, sit still!

II. *Our Life Problems.* They are set before us to test us. Each has its purpose! Some muscle or aptitude has to be tested and strengthened by use. It is thus that character is developed and impulses become principles. Our attitude to our fellow-men, the distinctions between different forms of recreation and amusement, the choice of companions, the supreme choice of marriage, the principles to be observed in business, the perplexity of determining on our life-course; and, most difficult of all, our behavior to members of our family circle, with whom we have to live, but with whom we have no sympathy—these are our problems. On these and many similar matters we may consult confidential advisers; but the results disappoint, and we recall Job's verdict on his friends.

From the experience of a long life I urge that the best confidant and adviser is Christ Himself. The wisest and safest course is to place the whole case in His hands, asking Him to advise and control. "Roll thy way upon the Lord," says the Psalmist; "trust also in him." He is the wonderful Counsellor, says the Prophet. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding," says the Book of the Wise: "in all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." He may suddenly put in your way a sagacious and experienced friend. You may, accidentally as it appears, overhear a conversation in a railway carriage, or come across a paragraph in a newspaper, or meet a friend in the street, and you will recognize that the clue to the maze has been placed

in your hand. The extraordinary series of events, which Samuel predicted as way-marks to Saul, will have their counterpart in your experience (see 1 Sam. x.). But always, when these incidents arise, you must wait for their confirmation by the inner witness. The outward incident will often substantiate a growing suspicion or hesitation, which has instinctively arisen in your mind; or a flash of light from within will illumine the road along which you have been groping your way. "Lo, all these things doth God work, twice, yea, thrice with a man, to bring back his soul from the pit and that he may be enlightened with the light of life." Outward incidents combine with the inner light as the gleam of the lighthouse tallies with the readings of the chart in the captain's room. Christ has definitely promised that they who follow Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

There is an immense realm within us, known as the subconscious self. It has been suggested that as much of this is concealed as seven-eighths of an iceberg are concealed beneath the surface of the ocean. By our surrender to Him, our Lord has access to this vast capacity of knowledge, and in these depths can formulate resolution, decisions, and judgments which are absolutely right. When once a decision has been arrived at which is confirmed by some outward incident and the teaching of Scripture, be sure to follow it out though the heavens threaten to fall. The late Bishop Temple said truly that "all true guidance consists in calling up from within the souls of men the powers that are living and working in the secret abysses of their souls."

Our vision is often misled by wreckers' lights. Our judgment is apt to be unjust because we seek our own way and whim instead of the glory of Him who has sent us forth. We lay too much stress on expediency and the possible immediate consequences instead of taking the far view. The fruit of our own wisdom is always bitter. Christ permits us to learn by hard experiences that we may be driven back to the guidance of His good Spirit. The future is not ours, but His! We may never have a future, or it may be quite different from what we think. The sea is very wide; the cross-currents very treacherous; our barque very frail. It is best to take the Pilot on board, then the captain may go down from the bridge and rest. Don't worry. Don't anticipate. Don't fear. Don't like Saul, be precipitate and offer the sacrifice before Samuel arrives. "Sit still, my soul, sit still. Jesus, whom thou hast trusted, will not fail thee. He will not rest until He has finished that which thou hast committed to His care!"

III. *Our Purposes.* The servants of Christ will often become aware of a purpose steadily forming in their hearts. Paul, kneeling in the temple, becomes aware that henceforth his life-work must lie among the Gentiles. Philip discovers that he must leave the revival which has broken out in Samaria and go to wait on a bit of wilderness-track for a certain purpose which is not further disclosed. Paul arrives at Ephesus just as Apollos leaves it. Catherine of Siena writes: "Henceforth, my daughter, do courageously and without hesitation those things which by the ordering of Providence will be put into thy hands; for, being armed by faith, thou wilt happily overcome

all thy adversaries." Mary Fisher traverses land and sea to give her message to the Sultan himself, which he receives with much attention and gravity. Stephen Grellet preaches a sermon, apparently to nobody, in the heart of the forest, which led to one thousand sheep being brought home to the Good Shepherd. Carey is impressed to go to India, Judson to Burmah, John Williams to Raratonga, Mary Slessor to Western Africa. Tens of thousands whose biographies have never been printed in letterpress have felt the urge of the Spirit of Christ and have dared to obey, to their everlasting joy.

At first the suggestion arises in the heart like the tiny cloud no bigger than a man's hand which Elijah's servant described on the horizon of the Mediterranean. At first it is put away as preposterous and out of the question. Then it comes again and again with growing persistence. A voice behind us says: "This is the way, walk ye in it." Then, as it persists, we begin to advance our contrary reasons. We have not the necessary funds. We think that the ties of home and business prevent. We put the suggestion away as needing gifts with which we are not endowed. Like Moses, we argue that we have not the necessary gifts of speech; like Jeremiah, we argue that we are as an ignorant child. Perhaps, then, physical illness overtakes us and seems to render obedience impossible. But it is the voice of the Good Shepherd who is calling one of His own sheep by name and putting it forth. The Spirit of Christ is designating another Barnabas and Saul to the work for which He has called them. And when Jesus calls, it is at our infinite loss that we hold back.

Our one act must be to obey. We must keep our souls before Him as a still lake. We must throw on Him the entire responsibility of opening the way, providing the funds, and inclining our friends to acquiesce. The route, the hour, the companionships, the minding of things behind, the preparing of things before, must be absolutely committed to His grace. He must open the way and go in front and bring up the rear. Everything will be deftly and abundantly arranged. All we have to do is to follow where He leads, quieting our souls by the refrain: "Sit still, my soul, sit still, for He will not be at rest till He has perfected that to which He has put His hand."

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth,
For Love's strength standeth in Love's sacrifice,
And whoso suffers most hath most to give."

XV

THE DAY IS AT HAND

"Let us put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."—Rom. xiii. 11–14.

THE soul that lives with God seems to be like a man passing through a suite of rooms in a palace, each room of the suite opening into a more gorgeously appointed apartment. There is no finality in God except in the sense that each horizon passed becomes an introduction to a still wider prospect and a more profound revelation of the divine nature.

It was so in the creation of the physical universe, the description of which, like the closing book of our Bible, is narrated after an enigmatic manner. The days stand for epochs or ages. In the first age we have the remodelling of the shapeless, lifeless earth, the brooding of the Spirit over the deep, the emergence of light through the gloom, and finally, the division between the waters above the cloudland and the waters below, that enswathe the earth as a garment. In the second and third ages we pass into a further development, for now the dry land appears garnished with vegetation and the devastating floods are penned in the abyss. During the fourth age, the sun, moon, and stars reflect themselves in the waters of the deep, and, as the clock of the earth, mark the succession of time. In the fifth age the air is filled with winged things, and the waters of the ocean teem with life. In the

sixth age the highest expression of God's thought appears in the human form, regnant over all things, and this great era presently merges into the seventh age, the rest of God, which has been full of redeeming grace. Thus we note that there is a succession, an increasing sublimity in the development of God's purpose. Each new door in the creative plan opens into a more complete and elaborate design.

The same plan has been followed in the history of our race. There have been clearly marked ages, dispensations, or (to use the phrase of Gen. i.) "days" in the story of mankind, each of which has ended in what seemed to be disaster. But what seemed to be disaster was the travail out of which a new and better era was born. Always remember that there are two kinds of suffering and sighing, that of death and that of life. The dying gladiator falls on the sand of the amphitheatre and breathes out his life in a sigh. The mother suffers, but her pangs of travail are forgotten for joy when a child is born into the world. Thus the apparent anguish in which each great age has passed has been to life and not to death, to further development rather than to deterioration and despair. "These," said our Lord, "are the beginning of travail" (Matt. xxiv. 8), and the apostle says that the creation groans and travails in pain until she is freed from the thraldom of decay and enters upon the glorious freedom of the sons of God!

There was, first, *the day,* or *age of primeval man,* which ended in the deluge. Out of this sprang the second day, the age of the patriarchs, which ended with the 400 years of Egyptian captivity. Then there dawned the third day, the age of the Hebrew nation,

which lasted till the overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 604 B. C. But out of that disaster emerged the fourth day, which in many respects was of a higher type, the age of preparation for Christ, which ended in His crucifixion and the fall of Jerusalem. This was a black night indeed, and probably Paul referred to it when, standing on the mount of vision and anticipating the coming Gentile era, he said, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." That would be an era, or age, or day, during which the Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached all over the wide world as a testimony to all the Gentiles, and then to this age, as to all preceding ones, the end would come (Matt. xxiv. 14). Our Lord described this same era as "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi. 24), because it covers the age of the great image, which Nebuchadnezzar beheld, and in which the gold of unchallenged supremacy descends to the clay of democracy, which cannot sustain the mighty responsibilities of empire. Finally all these kingdoms pass away like the dust of the threshing-floor in the evening breeze.

As Paul looked out from his mount of vision, he said, "The night is far spent," and he saw the first gleams of this wonderful age or era which has lasted from that time to this, and which has witnessed the day of the formation and growth of the Church, the day of missionary effort, the day of the noble Christian movements which to so large an extent have alleviated the ills from which men have suffered at the hands of their fellows.

But there are many signs that for us also there is an impending change. The shadows of night seem gathering over the world. Indeed they have been

accumulating since the French Revolution. From the close of the eighteenth century the blackness of darkness has been augmenting, until the very foundations of European civilization seem tottering to chaotic ruin. But, as we stand together on the mount of vision, may we not also say, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand"?

In Britain, when summer is at its height, excursions are made to the Arctic Circle, to view the midnight sun. It is a fascinating spectacle. The sun barely dips beneath the horizon, and there in the same heavens it is possible to see on the one hand the dying glory of the evening glow bathing the clouds in the rich hue of sunset, and on the other the pale lustre of the dawn silvering the slight cirrus cloudlets with exquisite beauty. So we who are living to-day are watching the evening glory of the closing years of "the times of the Gentiles," and in the sky there are symptoms of the approaching day, the age of which Virgil dreamed and which Isaiah foretold.

It is not within our province to detail the essential features of that age, except to say that He who died as Saviour will come to reign as King, and that the malign spirits who have operated "in the heavenlies" for evil will be replaced by the redeemed who will reign on the earth. Human life will go on then as now, but the invisible forces which will condition it will no longer be malign and evil, but pure and holy. Whereas men now live amid influences that tempt to evil, they will then live amid those that tend to good, and this shall last, we are told, for a thousand years.

In one of his latest books, Mr. H. G. Wells says: "The time draws near when man will awake out of

his sleep and his dreams will fall away. There shall be no more nationality anywhere in the world, but one humanity. There shall be neither emperor, nor king, nor leader, but the one God of mankind." There will be peace in the world. They shall not hurt nor destroy. The earth, which has borne the curse of human sin, will rid herself of her thorns and thistles. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar, the myrtle tree." This is no mere metaphor. South America is overrun by a prickly weed which makes certain forests impassable, but when this plant is properly cultivated it loses its prickles and becomes succulent and wholesome as an artichoke. The pear tree in its primitive state is covered with thorns, but when it is brought under careful cultivation its thorns become branches laden with fruit. Even the carnivoræ may cease to be such. Feed a sea-gull with grain, and after a time its stomach will be assimilated to that of a pigeon, just as, if you feed a pigeon on flesh, its gizzard will become the stomach of the carnivora. Of course these prophetic anticipations may be metaphors, and it will be wise to reserve our comments until we learn by experience what is meant by "the creation being made subject to vanity," from which it will be delivered.

But even that glorious age will end in night, for Satan will gather the nations for one last effort to frustrate the plans of God. The night, however, will be brief, and will be succeeded by an age in which there can be no further catastrophe, because the great drama of love's trial and victory will be completed and God will be all-in-all.

All God's endings are beginnings, and all the begin-

nings are stepping-stones to a more beautiful and fully developed order. Through man's sin each age has ended in catastrophe, but that has given the Almighty an opportunity for turning the catastrophic sin into the cloud upon which the rainbow of hope becomes apparent. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him and restrains its residue.

The evidence that the new day or age is at our doors seems to be guaranteed by many symptoms. The Jews are gathering back to their own land on British pledges, and the renaissance of Turkey provides the elements for Armageddon. Throughout the world nations are listening to the roar of anarchic and desolating forces which remind us of a sea threatening to overleap its bounds. The love of many is waxing cold. The missionary witness of the Church is almost complete. Voices, in other religions than our own, are predicting one more terrible war and then that divine event towards which the whole creation moves.

These are reasons which compel the belief that the day is at hand when "the Word of God" shall mount His white horse and come forth, followed by the troops of heaven arrayed in pure white linen. But, like so much in the book of Revelation, they are metaphors of events which defy detailed description, yet in which every syllable shall have its counterpart. But if all this be true, what manner of people ought we to be in all conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of that day?

This question is answered when Paul says: "Let us put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." What was the duty of the Church of that age is abundantly true of the Church of to-

day. We also must put off from us anything that dare not meet the inspection of daylight.

The metaphor is a military one. A Roman cohort has been marching all day in the sultry heat, but the baggage train has gone on before, and when the day's mileage is covered, the troops may reckon on comparative comfort and refreshment. At last, on the skyline, the prepared camp can be described, and soon the heavy armor has been unlaced and laid aside and the troops regale themselves according to their bent. Those tents may become scenes of uproar and revelry. Drunkenness and debauchery may steal in under the shadow of darkness. Quarrelling and disputing may alienate comrade from comrade. Finally the whole camp sinks into the silence of sleep, except where the sentry goes to and fro upon his beat. Hour passes after hour till the first glint of dawn appears on the eastern sky, and the voice of the watchman breaks in on the silence of the camp with the cry: "The night is departing, the day is advancing. Arise, comrades, and prepare to meet the light." Immediately the camp is astir. Undesirable people creep out of the tents, screened by the twilight. The soldiers put off the garments of the night and begin to clean and burnish and then to assume their armor, so as to meet the inspection of the General as he comes slowly along the line. They do not fear, for their armor glistens speckless in the sunny light. "Similarly," cries the apostle, "let us put off whatever is inconsistent with the inspection of the day."

Each of us knows what is the special work and disposition which to him or to her is "a work of darkness." It may be a secret sin which we nurse in

the dark, and which almost instinctively rises to our thought when we approach the Lord's table, or attend a convention for the promotion of Christian living, or watch in the silent chamber of mortal sickness. With Augustine the work of darkness was his relationship with a woman who threatened to be the ruin of his body and soul. As he stood in the garden at Milan and heard a voice which bade him take and read in the New Testament, it was on this passage that his eye fell, and it was to that work of darkness that God's Spirit directed him. There and then he put it away and donned the armor of light. He probably went humbly all his days, as he remembered the dominant tyranny of that sin, for he died in a little cell, when the Gauls were breaking into Carthage, with his eyes fastened on this text that faced his bed: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." I question whether many pass through life without having some such memory behind a double-screen; but, oh, the wonder of God's forgiveness, that it is for ever put away, and that, as in the oyster, the deep wound of the conscience holds a jewel of imperishable worth!

After all, there is only one thing that really matters, and that is the glorious personality of Jesus Christ. The world is filled with discord and strife, with imitations and make-believes, with shams and counterfeits. In the shadow of the departing night it is often difficult to discriminate between friend and foe and between the different shades of grey. But there is no mistake about Jesus Christ, and we gladly respond to the closing exhortation of the apostle to "put on the

Lord Jesus Christ." Clothe yourselves with Jesus Christ! Not in ecclesiastical habiliments: not in opinions about this system or that; not in systems of doctrine, but in the simplicity, the beauty, and the truth of Jesus Christ Himself. The world is full of argumentation and disputing, and how easy it is amid all the "isms" to lose Him who is "the Life, the Truth, and the Way."

What wonder that the world of men turns away from our many sects, our competing places of worship, our conflicts over our shibboleths? They say, "How are we to know which is right? We will have none of them." I was informed, for instance, in one country that I visited, of a place containing only an average population in which there were forty-four sects. What a travesty of Christianity! Many of these sects will travel over sea and land to make one proselyte to their views, but will take small pains to win new believers in Jesus Himself. Their one thought is to obtain new adherents to their little schemes of doctrine, or of eschatology, or of affinity with this view or with that. But when you begin to talk about the Master Himself they have nothing to say. Contrast their volubility over their small angle of truth with their silence when the name of Jesus is mentioned, and you discover in a moment that the religion is *it,* but not *He.*

For what was it that captured the world? Was it not the wonder and beauty of the new conception of life which was presented by the first Christians? They were the third race. Their religion was a life. They described Christianity, not as a belief, or a creed, but "a way." It was the new way of living. Jesus

had lifted a new ideal before the world. He was Himself the Life and the Way, and Christianity was spread in its earliest stages less by the apologist and preacher than by the beauty of Christlike lives, which reflected the beauty of Jesus. And this life energized and blessed the jaded world of that time because it did not shut itself in the wilderness with the anchorite or climb the pillar with Simon Stylites, but mixed freely with the home, the market, and the general life of the community. They drew their resources from the unseen, but translated them into the common affairs and duties of daily living.

Let this, then, be our last word. Whatever has been set forth in these pages of Pentecost, Calvary, the relation of soul and spirit, the conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, all must be subordinated to the one object of knowing Christ, putting on Christ, revealing Christ, and dying, speaking, and suffering in your small sphere, as Jesus would have done: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Yes, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,
He shall suffice us, for He has sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ is the beginning!
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

"Forenoon and afternoon and night,—Forenoon
And afternoon, and night,—
Forenoon, and—what?
The empty song repeats itself. No more!
Yes, that is Life; make this forenoon sublime,
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,
And Time is conquered, and thy crown is won."

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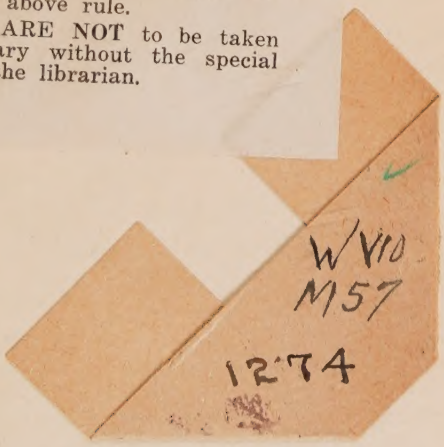

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